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TANCRED:

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BOOK IV.

CHAPTER VI.

NOTWITHSTANDING all the prescient care of the Duke and Duchess of Bellamont, it was destined that the stout arm of Colonel Brace should not wave by the side of their son when he was first attacked by the enemy, and now that he was afflicted by a most severe, if not fatal, illness, the practised skill of the Doctor Roby was also absent. Fresh exemplification of what all of us so frequently experience, that the most sagacious and matured arrangements are of little avail; that no one is present when he is wanted, and that nothing occurs as it was foreseen. Nor should we forget that the principal cause of all these mischances might perhaps be recognised in the inefficiency of the third person whom the parents of Tan-

cred had, with so much solicitude and at so great an expense, secured to him as a companion and counsellor in his travels. It cannot be denied, that if the theological attainments of the Rev. Mr. Bernard had been of a more profound and comprehensive character, it is possible that Lord Montacute might not have deemed it necessary to embark upon this new crusade, and ultimately to find himself in the deserts of Mount Sinai. However this may be, one thing was certain, that Tancred had been wounded without a single sabre of the Bellamont yeomanry being brandished in his defence; was now lying dangerously ill in an Arabian tent, without the slightest medical assistance; and perhaps was destined to quit this world, not only without the consolation of a priest of his holy church, but surrounded by heretics and infidels.

"We have never let any of the savages come near my lord," said Freeman to Baroni, on his return.

"Except the fair young gentleman," added Trueman, "and he is a Christian, or as good."

"He is a prince," said Freeman, reproachfully. "Have I not told you so twenty times? He is what they call in this country a Hameer, and lives in a castle, where he wanted my lord to visit him. I only wish he had gone with my lord to Mount Siny; I think it would have come to more good."

"He has been very attentive to my lord all the time," said Trueman; "indeed, he has never quitted my lord night or day; and only left his side when we heard the caravan had *returned*."

"I have seen him," said Baroni; "and now let us enter the tent."

Upon the divan, his head supported by many cushions, clad in a Syrian robe of the young Emir, and partly covered with a Bedoueen cloak, lay Tancred, deadly pale, his eyes open and fixed, and apparently unconscious of their presence. He was lying on his back, gazing on the roof of the tent, and was motionless. Fakredeen had raised his wounded arm, which had fallen from the couch, and had supported it with a pile made of cloaks and pillows. The countenance of Tancred was much changed since Baroni last beheld him: it was greatly extenuated, but the eyes glittered with an unearthly fire.

"We don't think he has ever slept," said Freeman, in a whisper.

"He did nothing but talk to himself the first two days," said Trueman; "but yesterday he has been more quiet."

Baroni advanced to the divan behind the head of Tancred, so that he might not be observed, and then, letting himself fall noiselessly on the carpet, he touched with a light finger the pulse of Lord Montacute.

"There is not too much blood here," he said, shaking his head.

"You don't think it is hopeless?" said Freeman, beginning to blubber.

"And all the great doings of my lord's coming of age to end in this!" said Trueman. "They sat down only two less

than a hundred at the steward's table for more than a week!"

Baroni made a sign to them to leave the tent. "God of my fathers!" he said, still seated on the ground, his arms folded, and watching Tancred earnestly with his bright black eyes; "this is a bad business. This is death or madness — perhaps both. What will M. de Sidonia say? He loves not men who fail. All will be visited on me. I shall be shelved. In Europe they would bleed him, and they would kill him; here they will not bleed him, and he may die. Such is medicine, and such is life! Now, if I only had as much opium as would fill the pipe of a Mandarin! that would be something. God of my fathers, this is a bad business!"

He rose softly; he approached nearer to Tancred, and examined his countenance more closely; there was a slight foam upon the lip, which he gently wiped away.

"The brain has worked too much," said Baroni to himself. "Often have I watched him pacing the deck during our voyage; never have I witnessed an abstraction so prolonged and so profound. He thinks as much as M. de Sidonia, and feels more. There is his weakness. The strength of my master is his superiority to all sentiment. No affections and a great brain — these are the men to command the world. No affections and a little brain — such is the stuff of which they make petty villains. And a great brain and a great heart — *what do* they make? Ah! I do not know. The last, perhaps,

wears off with time — and yet I wish I could save this youth, for he ever attracts me to him."

Thus he remained for some time seated on the carpet by the side of the divan, revolving in his mind every possible expedient that might benefit Tancred, and finally being convinced that none was in his power. What roused him from his watchful reverie was a voice that called his name very softly, and looking round he beheld the Emir Fakredeen on tiptoe, with his finger on his mouth. Baroni rose, and, Fakredeen inviting him with a gesture to leave the tent, he found without, the lady of the caravan.

"I want the Rose of Sharon to see your lord," said the young Emir, very anxiously, "for she is a great hakeem among our people."

"Perhaps in the desert, where there is none to be useful, I might not be useless," said Eva, with some reluctance and reserve.

"Hope has only one arrow left," said Baroni, mournfully.

"Is it indeed so bad?"

"Oh! save him, Eva — save him!" exclaimed Fakredeen, distractedly.

She placed her finger on her lip.

"Or I shall die," continued Fakredeen, "nor indeed have I any wish to live, if he depart from us."

Eva conversed apart for a few minutes with Baroni in a low

voice, and then drawing aside the curtain of the tent, they entered.

There was no change in the appearance of Tancred, but as they approached him he spoke. Baroni dropped into his former position, Fakredeen fell upon his knees, Eva alone was visible when the eyes of Tancred met hers. His vision was not unconscious of her presence; he stared at her with intentness. The change in her dress however would in all probability have prevented his recognising her even under indifferent circumstances. She was habited as a Bedoueen girl; a leathern girdle encircled her blue robe, a few gold coins were braided n her hair, and her head was covered with a fringed kefia.

Whatever was the impression made upon Tancred by this unusual apparition, it appeared to be only transient. His glance withdrawn, his voice again broke into incoherent but violent exclamations. Suddenly he said, with more moderation, but with firmness and distinctness, "I am guarded by angels."

Fakredeen shot a glance at Eva and Baroni, as if to remind them of the tenour of the discourse for which he had prepared them.

After a pause, he became somewhat violent, and seemed as if he would have waved his wounded arm, but Baroni, whose eye, though himself unobserved, never quitted his charge, laid his finger upon the arm, and Tancred did not struggle. Again he spoke of angels, but in a milder and *mournful* tone.

"Methinks you look like one," thought Eva, as she beheld his spiritual countenance lit up by a superhuman fire.

After a few minutes, she glanced at Baroni to signify her wish to leave the tent, and he rose and accompanied her. Fakredeen also rose with streaming eyes, and making the sign of the cross.

"Forgive me," he said to Eva, "but I cannot help it. Whenever I am in affliction I cannot help remembering that I am a Christian."

"I wish you would remember it at all times," said Eva, "and then, perhaps, none of us need have been here;" and then, not waiting for his reply, she addressed herself to Baroni. "I agree with you," she said. "If we cannot give him sleep, he will soon sleep for ever."

"Oh, give him sleep, Eva," said Fakredeen, wringing his hands; "you can do anything."

"I suppose," said Baroni, "it is hopeless to think of finding any opium here."

"Utterly," said Eva, "its practice is quite unknown among them."

"Send for some from El Khuds," said Fakredeen.

"Idle!" said Baroni; "this is an affair of hours, not of days."

"Oh, but I will go," exclaimed Fakredeen, "you do not know what I can do on one of my dromedaries! I will —"

Eva placed her hand on his arm without looking at him, and then continued to address Baroni. "Through the pass

I several times observed a small white and yellow flower in patches. I lost it as we advanced, and yet I should think it must have followed the stream. If it be, as I think, but I did not observe it with much attention, the flower of the mountain Arnica, I know a preparation from that shrub, which has a marvellous action on the nervous system."

"I am sure it is the mountain Arnica, and I am sure it will cure him," said Fakredeen.

"Time presses," said Eva to Baroni. "Call my maidens to our aid; and first of all let us examine the borders of the stream."

While his friends departed to exert themselves, Fakredeen remained behind, and passed his time partly in watching Tancred, partly in weeping, and partly in calculating the amount of his debts. This latter was a frequent, and to him, inexhaustible source of interest and excitement. His creative brain was soon lost in reverie. He conjured up Tancred restored to health, a devoted friendship between them, immense plans, not inferior achievements, and inexhaustible resources. Then when he remembered that he was himself the cause of the peril of that precious life on which all his future happiness and success were to depend, he cursed himself. Involved as were the circumstances in which he habitually found himself entangled, the present complication was certainly not inferior to any of the perplexities which he had hitherto experienced.

He was to become the bosom friend of a being whom he

had successfully plotted to make a prisoner and plunder, and whose life was consequently endangered; he had to prevail on Amalek to relinquish the ransom which had induced the Great Sheikh to quit his Syrian pastures, and had cost the lives of some of his most valuable followers; while, on the other hand, the new moon was rapidly approaching, when the young Emir had appointed to meet Scheriff Effendi at Gaza, to receive the arms and munitions which were to raise him to empire, and for which he had purposed to pay by a portion of his share in the great plunder which he had himself projected. His baffled brain whirled with wild and impracticable combinations, till, at length, frightened and exhausted, he called for his nargilly, and sought, as was his custom, serenity from its magic tube. In this wise more than three hours had elapsed, the young Emir was himself again, and was calculating the average of the various rates of interest in every town in Syria, from Gaza to Aleppo, when Baroni returned bearing in his hand an Egyptian vase.

"You have found the magic flowers?" asked Fakredeen, eagerly.

"The flowers of Arnica, noble Emir, of which the lady Eva spoke. I wish the potion had been made in the new moon; however, it has been blessed. Two things alone now are wanting, that my lord should drink it, and that it should cure him."

It was not yet noon when Tancred quaffed the potion. He took it without difficulty, though apparently unconscious of

the act. As the sun reached its meridian height, Tancred sank into a profound slumber. Fakredeen rushed away to tell Eva, who had now retired into the innermost apartments of the pavilion of Amalek; Baroni never quitted the tent of his lord.

The sun set; the same beautiful rosy tint suffused the tombs and temples of the city as on the evening of their first forced arrival: still Tancred slept. The camels returned from the river, the lights began to sparkle in the circle of black tents, still Tancred slept. He slept during the day, and he slept during the twilight, and when the night came, still Tancred slept. The silver lamp, fed by the oil of the palm tree, threw its delicate white light over the couch on which he rested. Mute, but ever vigilant, Fakredeen and Baroni gazed on their friend and master; still Tancred slept.

It seemed a night that would never end, and, when the first beam of the morning came, the Emir and his companion mutually recognised on their respective countenances an expression of distrust, even of terror. Still Tancred slept; in the same posture and with the same expression, unmoved and pale. Was it, indeed, sleep? Baroni touched his wrist, but could find no pulse; Fakredeen held his bright dagger over the mouth, yet its brilliancy was not for a moment clouded. But he was not cold.

The brow of Baroni was knit with deep thought, and his searching eye fixed upon the recumbent form; Fakredeen, *frigh*tened, ran away to Eva.

"I am frightened, because you are frightened," said Fakredeen, "whom nothing ever alarms. O Rose of Sharon! why are you so pale?"

"It is a stain upon our tents if this youth be lost," said Eva in a low voice, yet attempting to speak with calmness.

"But what is it on me!" exclaimed Fakredeen distractedly — "A stain! I shall be branded like Cain. No, I will never enter Damascus again, or any of the cities of the coast. I will give up all my castles to my cousin Francis El Kazin, on condition that he does not pay my creditors. I will retire to Mar Hanna. I will look upon man no more."

"Be calm, my Fakredeen; there is yet hope; my responsibility at this moment is surely not lighter than yours."

"Ah! you did not know him, Eva!" exclaimed Fakredeen, passionately — "you never listened to him! He cannot be to you what he is to me. I loved him!"

She pressed her finger to her lips, for they had arrived at the tent of Tancred. The young Emir, drying his streaming eyes, entered first, and then came back and ushered in Eva. They stood together by the couch of Tancred. The expression of distress, of suffering, of extreme tension, which had not marred but which at least had mingled with the spiritual character of his countenance the previous day, had disappeared. If it were death, it was at least beautiful. Softness and repose suffused his features, and his brow looked as if it had been the temple of an immortal spirit.

Eva gazed upon the form with a fond, deep melancholy,

Fakredeen and Baroni exchanged glances. Suddenly Tancred moved, heaved a deep sigh, and opened his dark eyes. The unnatural fire which had yesterday lit them up had fled. Calmly and thoughtfully he surveyed those around him, and then he said, "The Lady of Bethany!"

CHAPTER VII.

BETWEEN the Egyptian and the Arabian deserts, formed by two gulfs of the Erythræan sea, is a peninsula of granite mountains. It seems as if an ocean of lava, when its waves were literally running mountains high, had been suddenly commanded to stand still. These successive summits, with their peaks and pinnacles, enclose a series of valleys, in general stern and savage, yet some of which are not devoid of pastoral beauty. There may be found brooks of silver brightness, and occasionally groves of palms and gardens of dates, while the neighbouring heights command sublime landscapes, the opposing mountains of Asia and of Afric, and the blue bosom of two seas. On one of these elevations, more than five thousand feet above the ocean, is a convent; again, nearly three thousand feet above this convent, is a towering peak, and this is Mount Sinai.

On the top of Mount Sinai are two ruins, a Christian church and a Mohametan mosque. In this, the sublimest scene of Arabian glory, Israel and Ishmael alike raised their altars to the great God of Abraham. Why are they in ruins? Is it that human structures are not to be endured amid the awful temples of nature and revelation; and that the column and the cupola crumble into nothingness in sight of the hallowed Horeb and on the soil of the eternal Sinai?

Ascending the mountain, about half way between the convent and the utmost height of the towering peak, is a small plain surrounded by rocks. In its centre are a cypress tree and a fountain. This is the traditional scene of the greatest event of time.

'T is night; a solitary pilgrim, long kneeling on the sacred soil, slowly raises his agitated glance to the starry vault of Araby, and, clasping his hands in the anguish of devotion, thus prays: —

"O Lord God of Israel, Creator of the universe, ineffable Jehovah! a child of Christendom, I come to thine ancient Arabian altars to pour forth the heart of tortured Europe. Why art thou silent? Why no longer do the messages of thy renovating will descend on earth? Faith fades and duty dies. A profound melancholy has fallen on the spirit of man. The priest doubts, the monarch cannot rule, the multitude moans and toils, and calls in its frenzy upon unknown gods. If this transfigured mount may not again behold thee; if not again, upon thy sacred Syrian plains, Divinity may teach and solace man; if prophets may not rise again to herald hope; at least, of all the starry messengers that guard thy throne, let one appear, to save thy creatures from a terrible despair!"

A dimness suffused the stars of Arabia; the surrounding heights that had risen sharp and black in the clear purple air, blended in shadowy and fleeting masses, the huge branches of the cypress tree seemed to stir, and the kneeling pilgrim *sank upon* the earth senseless and in a trance.

And there appeared to him a form: a shape that should be human, but vast as the surrounding hills. Yet such was the symmetry of the vision that the visionary felt his littleness rather than the colossal proportions of the apparition. It was the semblance of one who, though not young, was still untouched by time; a countenance like an oriental night, dark yet lustrous, mystical yet clear. Thought, rather than melancholy, spoke from the pensive passion of his eyes, while on his lofty forehead glittered a star that threw a solemn radiance on the repose of his majestic features.

"Child of Christendom," said the mighty form, as he seemed slowly to wave a sceptre, fashioned like a palm tree, "I am the angel of Arabia, the guardian spirit of that land which governs the world; for power is neither the sword nor the shield, for these pass away, but ideas, which are divine. The thoughts of all lands come from a higher source than man, but the intellect of Arabia comes from the Most High. Therefore it is that from this spot issue the principles which regulate the human destiny.

"That Christendom which thou hast quitted, and over whose expiring attributes thou art a mourner, was a savage forest while the cedars of Lebanon, for countless ages, had built the palaces of mighty kings. Yet in that forest brooded infinite races that were to spread over the globe and give a new impulse to its ancient life. It was decreed that, when they burst from their wild woods, the Arabian principles should meet them on the threshold of the old world to guide and to

civilize them. All had been prepared. The Cæsars had conquered the world to place the Laws of Sinai on the throne of the Capitol, and a Galilean Arab advanced and traced on the front of the rude conquerors of the Cæsars the subduing symbol of the last development of Arabian principles.

"Yet again — and Europe is in the throes of a great birth. The multitudes again are brooding; but they are not now in the forest: they are in the cities and in the fertile plains. Since the first sun of this century rose, the intellectual colony of Arabia, once called Christendom, has been in a state of partial and blind revolt. Discontented, they attributed their suffering to the principles to which they owed all their happiness, and in receding from which they had become proportionably miserable. They have hankered after other gods than the God of Sinai and of Calvary, and they have achieved only desolation. Now they despair. But the eternal principles that controlled barbarian vigour can alone cope with morbid civilization. The equality of man can only be accomplished by the sovereignty of God. The longing for fraternity can never be satisfied but under the sway of a common father. The relations between Jehovah and his creatures can be neither too numerous nor too near. In the increased distance between God and man, have grown up all those developments that have made life mournful. Cease then to seek in a vain philosophy the solution of the social problem that perplexes you. Announce the sublime and solacing doctrine of theocratic equality. Fear not, faint not, falter not. Obey the impulse of

thine own spirit, and find a ready instrument in every human being."

A sound, as of thunder, roused Tancred from his trance. He looked around and above. There rose the mountains sharp and black in the clear purple air; there shone, with undimmed lustre, the Arabian stars; but the voice of the angel still lingered in his ear. He descended the mountain: at its base, near the convent, were his slumbering guards, some steeds and crouching camels.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE beautiful daughter of Besso, pensive and abstracted, played with her beads in the pavilion of her grandfather. Two of her maidens, who had attended her, in a corner of this inner compartment accompanied the wild murmur of their voices on a stringed instrument, which might in the old days have been a psaltery. They sang the loves of Antar and of Ibla, of Leila and of Mejnoun; the romance of the desert, tales of passion and of plunder, of the rescue of women and the capture of camels, of heroes with a lion heart, and heroines brighter and softer than the moon.

The beautiful daughter of Besso, pensive and abstracted, played with her beads in the pavilion of her grandfather. Why is the beautiful daughter of Besso pensive and abstracted? What thoughts are flitting over her mind, silent and soft, like the shadows of birds over the sunshiny earth?

Something that was neither silent nor soft disturbed the lady from her reverie; the voice of the Great Sheikh, in a tone of altitude and harshness, with him most unusual. He was in an adjacent apartment, vowing that he would sooner eat the mother of some third person, who was attempting to influence him, than adopt the suggestion offered. Then there were softer and more persuasive tones from his companion, but evidently ineffectual. Then the voices of both rose together

in emulous clamour — one roaring like a bull, the other shrieking like some wild bird; one full of menace, and the other taunting and impertinent. All this was followed by a dead silence, which continuing, Eva assumed that the Sheikh and his companion had quitted his tent. While her mind was recurring to those thoughts which occupied them previously to this outbreak, the voice of Fakredeen was heard outside her tent, saying, "Rose of Sharon, let me come into the hareem;" and, scarcely waiting for permission, the young Emir, flushed and excited, entered, and almost breathless threw himself on the divan.

"Who says I am a coward?" he exclaimed, with a glance of devilish mockery; "I may run away sometimes, but what of that? I have got moral courage, the only thing worth having, since the invention of gunpowder. The beast is not killed, but I have looked into the den; 't is something. Courage, my fragrant Rose, have faith in me at last. I may make an imbroglio sometimes, but, for getting out of a scrape, I would back myself against any picaroon in the Levant; and that is saying a good deal."

"Another imbroglio?"

"Oh, no! the same — part of the great blunder. You must have heard us raging like a thousand Afrites. I never knew the Great Sheikh so wild."

"And why?"

"He should take a lesson from Mehemet Ali," continued the Emir. "Giving up Syria, after the conquest, was a much

greater sacrifice than giving up plunder which he has not yet touched. And the great Pacha did it as quietly as if he were marching into Stamboul instead, which he might have done if he had been an Arab instead of a Turk. Everything comes from Arabia, my dear Eva — at least everything that is worth anything. We two ought to thank our stars every day, that we were born Arabs."

"And the Great Sheikh still harps upon this ransom?" inquired Eva.

"He does, and most unreasonably. For after all, what do we ask him to give up? — a bagatelle."

"Hardly that," said Eva; "two millions of piastres can scarcely be called a bagatelle."

"It is not two millions of piastres," said Fakredeen; "there is your fallacy, 't is the same as your grandfather's. In the first place, he would have taken one million; then half belonged to me, which reduces his share to five hundred thousand; then I meant to have borrowed his share of him."

"Borrowed his share!" said Eva.

"Of course, I should have allowed him interest — good interest. What could the Great Sheikh want five hundred thousand piastres for? He has camels enough; he has so many horses, that he wants to change some with me for arms at this moment. Is he to dig a hole in the sand by a well-side to put his treasure in, like the treasure of Solomon, or to sew up his bills of exchange in his turban? The thing is ridiculous. I never contemplated, for a moment, that the

Great Sheikh should take any hard piastres out of circulation, to lock them up in the wilderness. It might disturb the currency of all Syria, upset the exchanges, and very much injure your family, Eva, of whose interests I am never unmindful. I meant the Great Sheikh to invest his capital; he might have made a good thing of it. I could have afforded to pay him thirty per cent. for his share, and made as much by the transaction myself; for you see, as I am paying sixty per cent. at Beirout, Tripoli, Latakia, and every accursed town of the coast at this moment, the thing is clear; and I wish you would only get your father to view it in the same light, and we might do immense things! Think of this, my Rose of Sharon — dear, dear Eva, think of this; your father might make his fortune and mine too, if he would only lend me money at thirty per cent."

"You frighten me always, Fakredeen, by these allusions to your affairs. Can it be possible that they are so very bad?"

"Good, Eva, you mean good. I should be incapable of anything, if it were not for my debts. I am naturally so indolent, that if I did not remember in the morning that I was ruined, I should never be able to distinguish myself."

"You never will distinguish yourself," said Eva; "you never can, with these dreadful embarrassments."

"Shall I not?" said Fakredeen, triumphantly. "What are my debts to my resources? That is the point. You cannot

judge of a man by only knowing what his debts are; you must be acquainted with his resources."

"But your estates are mortgaged, your crops sold — at least you tell me so," said Eva, mournfully.

"Estates! crops! A man may have an idea worth twenty estates — a principle of action that will bring him in a greater harvest than all Lebanon."

"A principle of action is indeed precious," said Eva; "but, although you certainly have ideas and very ingenious ones, a principle of action is exactly the thing which I have always thought you wanted."

"Well, I have got it at last," said Fakredeen; "everything comes if a man will only wait."

"And what is your principle of action?"

"Faith."

"In yourself? Surely in that respect you have not hitherto been sceptical?"

"No; in Mount Sinai."

"In Mount Sinai!"

"You may well be astonished; but so it is. The English Prince has been to Mount Sinai, and he has seen an angel. What passed between them I do not yet know; but one thing is certain — he is quite changed by the interview. He is all for action: as far as I can form an opinion in the present crude state of affairs, it is not at all impossible that he may put himself at the head of the Asian movement. If you have *faith, there is nothing* you may not do. One thing is quite

settled, that he will not at present return to Jerusalem, but, for change of air and other reasons, make a visit with me to Canobia."

"He seems to have great purpose in him," said Eva, with an air of some constraint.

"By the bye," said Fakredeen, "how came you, Eva, never to tell me that you were acquainted with him?"

"Acquainted with him!" said Eva.

"Yes; he recognised you immediately when he recovered himself, and he has admitted to me since, that he has seen you before; though I could not get much out of him about it. He will talk for ever about Arabia, faith, war, and angels, but if you touch on anything personal, I observe he is always very shy. He has not my fatal frankness. Did you know him at Jerusalem?"

"I met him by hazard for a moment at Bethany; I neither asked then, nor did he impart to me, his name. How then could I tell you we were acquainted? or be aware that the stranger of my casual interview was this young Englishman whom you have made a captive."

"Hush!" said Fakredeen, with an air of real or affected alarm. "He is going to be my guest at my principal castle. What do you mean by captive? You mean whom I have saved from captivity, or am about to save?"

"Well, that would appear to be the real question to which you ought to address yourself at this moment," said Eva. "Were I you, I should postpone the great Asian movement

until you had disembarrassed yourself from your present position, rather an equivocal one both for a patriot and a friend."

"Oh! I 'll manage the Great Sheikh," said Fakredeen, carelessly. "There is too much plunder in the future for Amalek to quarrel with me. When he scents the possibility of the Bedoueen cavalry being poured into Syria and Asia Minor, we shall find him more manageable. The only thing now is to heal the present disappointment by extenuating circumstances. If I could screw up a few thousand piastres for backsheesh," and he looked Eva in the face, "or could put anything in his way! What do you think, Eva?"

Eva shook her head.

"What an obstinate Jew dog he is!" said Fakredeen. "His rapacity is revolting!"

"An obstinate Jew dog!" exclaimed Eva, rising, her eyes flashing, her nostril dilating with contemptuous rage. The manner of Fakredeen had not pleased her this morning. His temper was very uncertain, and, when crossed, he was deficient in delicacy. Indeed, he was too selfish, with all his sensibility and refined breeding, to be ever sufficiently considerate of the feelings of others. He was piqued also that he had not been informed of the previous acquaintance of Eva and Tancred. Her reason for not apprising him of their interview at Bethany, though not easily impugnable, was not as satisfactory to his understanding as to his ear. Again, *his mind* and heart were so absorbed at this moment by the

image of Tancred, and he was so entirely under the influence of his own idealized conceptions of his new and latest friend, that, according to his custom, no other being could interest him. Although he was himself the sole cause of all the difficult and annoying circumstances in which he found himself involved, the moment that his passions and his interests alike required that Tancred should be free and uninjured, he acted, and indeed felt, as if Amalek alone were responsible for the capture and the detention of Lord Montacute.

The young Emir indeed was, at this moment, in one of those moods, which had often marred his popularity, but in which he had never indulged towards Eva before. She had, throughout his life, been the commanding influence of his being. He adored and feared her, and knew that she loved, and rather despised him. But Eva had ceased to be the commanding influence over Fakredeen. At this moment, Fakredeen would have sacrificed the whole family of Besso to secure the devotion of Tancred; and the coarse and rude exclamation to which he had given vent, indicated the current of his feelings and the general tenour of his mind.

Eva knew him by heart. Her clear sagacious intellect acting upon an individual, whom sympathy and circumstances had combined to make her comprehend, analysed with marvellous facility his complicated motives, and in general successfully penetrated his sovereign design.

"An obstinate Jew dog!" she exclaimed; "and who art thou — thou jackal of this lion! — who should dare to speak

thus? Is it not enough that you have involved us all in unspeakable difficulty and possible disgrace, that we are to receive words of contumely from lips like yours! One would think you were the English Consul arrived here to make a representation in favour of his countryman, instead of being the individual who planned his plunder, occasioned his captivity, and endangered his life! It is a pity that this young noble is not acquainted with your claims to his confidence."

The possibility that in a moment of irritation Eva might reveal his secret, some rising remorse at what he had said, and the superstitious reverence with which he still clung to her, all acting upon Fakredeen at the same time, he felt that he had gone too far, and thereupon he sprang from the divan, on which he had been insolently lolling, and threw himself at the feet of his foster-sister, whimpering and kissing her slippers, and calling her, between his sobs, a thousand fond names.

"I am a villain," he said, "but you know it; you have always known it. For God's sake stand by me now; 't is my only chance. You are the only being I love in the world, except your family. Yow know how I respect them. Is not Besso my father? And the Great Sheikh — I honour the Great Sheikh. He is one of my allies. Even this accursed business proves it. Besides, what do you mean by words of contumely from my lips? Am I not a Jew myself, or as good? Why should I insult them? I only wish we were in *the Land of Promise*, instead of this infernal wilderness."

"Well, well, let us consult together," said Eva, "reproaches are barren."

"Ah! Eva," said Fakredeen, "I am not reproaching you; but if, the evening I was at Bethany, you had only told me that you had just parted with this Englishman, all this would not have occurred."

"How do you know that I had then just parted with this Englishman?" said Eva, colouring and confused.

"Because I marked him on the road. I little thought then that he had been in your retreat. I took him for some Frank, looking after the tomb of Lazarus."

"I found him in my garden," said Eva, not entirely at her ease, "and sent my attendants to him."

Fakredeen was walking up and down the tent, and seemed lost in thought. Suddenly he stopped, and said, "I see it all; I have a combination that will put all right."

"Put all right?"

"See, the day after to-morrow I have appointed to meet a friend of mine at Gaza, who has a caravan that wants convoy through the desert to the mountain. The Sheikh of Sheikhs shall have it. It will be as good as ten thousand piastres. That will be honey in his mouth. He will forget the past, and our English friend can return with you and me to El Khuds."

"I shall not return to El Khuds," said Eva. "The Great Sheikh will convoy me to Damascus, where I shall remain till I go to Aleppo."

"May you never reach Aleppo!" said Fakredeen, with a clouded countenance, for Eva in fact alluded to her approaching marriage with her cousin.

"But after all," resumed Eva, wishing to change the current of his thoughts, "all these arrangements, as far as I am interested, depend upon the success of my mission to the Great Sheikh. If he will not release my father's charge, the spears of his people will never guard me again. And I see little prospect of my success; nor do I think ten thousand piastres, however honestly gained, will be more tempting than the inclination to oblige our house."

"Ten thousand piastres is not much," said Fakredeen, "I give it every three months for interest to a little Copt at Beirout, whose property I will confiscate the moment I have the government of the country in my hands. But then I only add my ten thousand piastres to the amount of my debt. Ten thousand piastres in coin are a very different affair. They will jingle in the Great Sheikh's purse. His people will think he has got the treasure of Solomon. It will do; he will give them all a gold kaireen a-piece, and they will braid them in their girls' hair."

"It will scarcely buy camels for Sheikh Salem's widow," said Eva.

"I will manage that," said Fakredeen. "The Great Sheikh has camels enough, and I will give him arms in exchange."

"*Arms at* Canobia will not reach the stony wilderness."

"No; but I have got arms nearer at hand; that is, my friend, my friend whom I am going to meet at Gaza, has some; enough, and to spare. By the Holy Sepulchre I see it!" said Fakredeen. "I tell you how I will manage the whole business. The Great Sheikh wants arms; well, I will give him five hundred muskets for the ransom, and he shall have the convoy besides. He 'll take it. I know him. He thinks now all is lost, and, when he finds that he is to have a jingling purse and English muskets enough to conquer Tadmor, he will close."

"But how are we to get these arms?" said Eva.

"Why, Scheriff Effendi, to be sure. You know I am to meet him at Gaza the day after to-morrow, and receive his five thousand muskets. Well, five hundred for the Great Sheikh will make them four thousand five hundred; no great difference."

"Scheriff Effendi!" said Eva, with some surprise, "I thought I had obtained three months' indulgence for you with Scheriff Effendi."

"Ah! yes — no," said Fakredeen, blushing. "The fact is, Eva, darling, beloved Eva, it is no use telling any more lies. I only asked you to speak to Scheriff Effendi to obtain time for me about payment, to throw you off the scent, as you so strongly disapproved of my buccaneering project. But Scheriff Effendi is a camel. I was obliged to agree to meet him at Gaza on the new moon, pay him his two hundred thousand piastres, and receive the cargo. Well, I turn circum-

stances to account. The Great Sheikh will convey the muskets to the Mountain."

"But who is to pay for them?" inquired Eva.

"Why, if men want to head the Asian movement, they must have muskets," said Fakredeen; "and, after all, as we are going to save the English Prince two millions of piastres, I do not think he can object to paying Scheriff Effendi for his goods; particularly as he will have the muskets for his money."

CHAPTER IX.

TANCRED rapidly recovered. On the second day after his recognition of Eva, he had held that conversation with Fakredeen, which had determined the young Emir not to lose a moment in making the effort to induce Amalek to forego his ransom, the result of which he had communicated to Eva on their subsequent interview. On the third day, Tancred rose from his couch, and would even have quitted the tent, had not Baroni dissuaded him. He was the more induced to do so, for on this day he missed his amusing companion, the Emir. It appeared from the account of Baroni, that his highness had departed at dawn, on his dromedary, and without an attendant. According to Baroni, nothing was yet settled either as to the ransom or the release of Tancred. It seemed that the Great Sheikh had been impatient to return to his chief encampment, and nothing but the illness of Tancred would probably have induced him to remain in the stony Arabia as long as he had done. The lady Eva had not, since her arrival at the ruined city, encouraged Baroni in any communication on the subject which heretofore during their journey had entirely occupied her consideration, from which he inferred that she had nothing very satisfactory to relate; yet he was not without hope, as he felt assured that Eva would not have remained a day were she convinced that there was no chance

of effecting her original purpose. The comparative contentment of the Great Sheikh at this moment, her silence, and the sudden departure of Fakredeen, induced Baroni to believe that there was yet something on the cards, and, being of a sanguine disposition, he sincerely encouraged his master, who however did not appear to be very desponding.

"The Emir told me yesterday that he was certain to arrange everything," said Tancred, "without in anyway compromising us. We cannot expect such an adventure to end like a day of hunting. Some camels must be given, and, perhaps, something else. I am sure the Emir will manage it all, especially with the aid and counsel of that beauteous Lady of Bethany, in whose wisdom and goodness I have implicit faith."

"I have more faith in her than in the Emir," said Baroni. "I never know what these Shehaabs are after. Now he has not gone to El Khuds this morning; of that I am sure."

"I am under the greatest obligations to the Emir Fakredeen," said Tancred, "and, independently of such circumstances, I very much like him."

"I know nothing against the noble Emir," said Baroni, "and I am sure he has been extremely polite and attentive to your lordship — but still those Shehaabs, they are such a set — always after something!"

"He is ardent and ambitious," said Tancred, "and he is young. Are these faults! Besides, he has not had the advantage of our stricter training. He has been without guides; *and is somewhat* undisciplined, and self-formed. But he

has a great and interesting position, and is brilliant and energetic. Providence may have appointed him to fulfil great ends."

"A Shehaab will look after the main chance," said Baroni.

"But his main chance may be the salvation of his country," said Tancred.

"Nothing can save his country," said Baroni. "The Syrians were ever slaves."

"I do not call them slaves now," said Tancred; "why, they are armed and are warlike! All that they want is a cause."

"And that they never will have," said Baroni.

"Why?"

"The East is used up."

"It is not more used up than when Mahomet arose," said Tancred. "Weak and withering as may be the government of the Turks, it is not more feeble and enervated than that of the Greek empire and the Chosroes."

"I don't know anything about them," replied Baroni, "but I know there is nothing to be done with the people here. I have seen something of them," said Baroni. "M. de Sidonia tried to do something in '39, and, if there had been a spark of spirit or of sense in Syria, that was the time — but —" and here Baroni shrugged his shoulders.

"But what was your principle of action in '39?" inquired Tancred, evidently interested.

"The only principle of action in this world," said Baroni, "we had plenty of money; we might have had three millions."

"And if you had had six, or sixteen, your efforts would have been equally fruitless. I do not believe in national regeneration in the shape of a foreign loan. Look at Greece! And yet a man might climb Mount Carmel, and utter three words which would bring the Arabs again to Grenada, and perhaps further."

"They have no artillery," said Baroni.

"And the Turks have artillery and cannot use it," said Lord Montacute. "Why, the most favoured part of the globe at this moment is entirely defenceless; there is not a soldier worth firing at in Asia except the Sepoys. The Persian, Assyrian, and Babylonian monarchies might be gained in a morning with faith and the flourish of a sabre."

"You would have the great powers interfering," said Baroni.

"What should I care for the great powers, if the Lord of Hosts were on my side!"

"Why, to be sure they could not do much at Bagdad or Ispahan."

"Work out a great religious truth on the Persian and Mesopotamian plains: the most exuberant soils in the world with the scantiest population — it would revivify Asia. It must spread. The peninsula of Arabia, when in action, must always command the peninsula of the lesser Asia. Asia revivified would act upon Europe. The European comfort,

which they call civilization, is, after all, confined to a very small space: the island of Great Britain, France, and the course of a single river — the Rhine. The greater part of Europe is as dead as Asia, without the consolation of climate and the influence of immortal traditions."

"I just found time, my lord, when I was at Jerusalem, to call in at the Consulate, and see the colonel," said Baroni; "I thought it as well to explain the affair a little to him. I found that even the rumour of our mischance had not reached him; so I said enough to prevent any alarm when it arrived; he will believe that we furnished him with the priority of intelligence, and he expects your daily return."

"You did well to call; we know not what may happen. I doubt however whether I shall return to Jerusalem. If affairs are pleasantly arranged here, I think of visiting the Emir, at his castle of Canobia. A change of air must be the best thing for me, and Lebanon, by his account, is delicious at this season. Indeed, I want air, and I must go out now, Baroni; I cannot stay in this close tent any longer; the sun has set, and there is no longer any fear of those fatal heats of which you are in such dread for me."

It was the first night of the new moon, and the white beams of the young crescent were just beginning to steal over the lately flushed and empurpled scene. The air was still glowing, and the evening breeze, which sometimes wandered through the ravines from the gulf of Akabah, had not yet arrived. Tancred, shrouded in his Bedoueen cloak, and

accompanied by Baroni, visited the circle of black tents, which they found almost empty, the whole band, with the exception of the scouts who are always on duty in an Arab encampment, being assembled in the ruins of the amphitheatre, in whose arena, opposite to the pavilion of the Great Sheikh, a celebrated poet was reciting the visit of Antar to the temple of the fire-worshippers, and the adventures of that greatest of Arabian heroes among the effeminate and astonished courtiers of the generous and magnificent Nushirvan.

The audience was not a scanty one, for this chosen detachment of the children of Rechab had been two hundred strong, and the great majority of them were now assembled; some seated, as the ancient Idumæans, on the still entire seats of the amphitheatre; most squatted in groups upon the ground, though at a respectful distance from the poet; others standing amid the crumbling pile and leaning against the tall dark fragments just beginning to be silvered by the moonbeam: but in all their countenances, their quivering features, their flashing eyes, the mouth open with absorbing suspense, were expressed a wild and vivid excitement, the heat of sympathy, and a ravishing delight.

When Antar, in the tournament, overthrew the famous Greek knight, who had travelled from Constantinople to beard the court of Persia; when he caught in his hand the assassin spear of the Persian satrap, envious of his Arabian chivalry, and returned it to his adversary's heart; when he shouted *from his saddle* that he was the lover of Ibla and the horseman

of the age; the audience exclaimed with rapturous earnestness, "It is true — it is true!" although they were guaranteeing the assertions of a hero who lived, and loved, and fought more than fourteen hundred years before. Antar is the Iliad of the desert, the hero is the passion of the Bedoueens. They will listen for ever to his forays, when he raised the triumphant cry of his tribe, "Oh! by Abs — oh! by Adnan," to the narratives of the camels he captured, the men he slew, and the maidens to whose charms he was indifferent, for he was "ever the lover of Ibla." What makes this great Arabian invention still more interesting is, that it was composed at a period antecedent to the Prophet: it describes the desert before the Koran, and it teaches us how little the dwellers in it were changed by the introduction and adoption of Islamism.

As Tancred and his companion reached the amphitheatre, a ringing laugh resounded.

"Antar is dining with the King of Persia after his victory," said Baroni; "this is a favourite scene with the Arabs. Antar asks the courtiers the name of every dish and whether the king dines so every day. He bares his arms, and chucks the food into his mouth without ever moving his jaws. They have heard this all their lives, but always laugh at it with the same heartiness. Why, Shedad, son of Amroo," continued Baroni to an Arab near him, "you have listened to this ever since you first tasted liban, and it still pleases you!"

"I am never wearied with listening to fine language," said

the Bedoueen; "perfumes are always sweet, though you may have smelt them a thousand times."

Except when there was some expression of feeling elicited by the performance, a shout or a laugh, the silence was absolute. Not a whisper could be heard; and it was in the most muffled tone that Baroni intimated to Tancred that the Great Sheikh was present, and that, as this was his first appearance since his illness, he must pay his respects to Amalek. So saying, and preceding Tancred, in order that he might announce his arrival, Baroni approached the pavilion. The Great Sheikh welcomed Tancred with a benignant smile, motioned to him to sit upon his carpet; rejoiced that he was recovered; hoped that he should live a thousand years; gave him his pipe, and then, turning again to the poet, was instantly lost in the interest of his narrative. Baroni standing as near Tancred as the carpet would permit him, occasionally leant over and gave his lord an intimation of what was occurring.

After a little while, the poet ceased. Then there was a general hum and great praise, and many men said to each other, "All this is true, for my father told it to me before." The Great Sheikh, who was highly pleased, ordered his slaves to give the poet a cup of coffee, and, taking from his own vest an immense purse, more than a foot in length, he extracted from it, after a vast deal of research, one of the smallest of *conceivable* coins which the poet pressed to his lips, and,

notwithstanding the exiguity of the donation, declared that God was great.

"O Sheikh of Sheikhs," said the poet, "what I have recited, though it is by the gift of God, is in fact written, and has been ever since the days of the giants; but I have also dipped my pen into my own brain, and now I would recite a poem which I hope some day may be suspended in the temple of Mecca. It is in honour of one who, were she to rise to our sight, would be as the full moon when it rises over the desert. Yes, I sing of Eva, the daughter of Amalek, (the Bedoueens always omitted Besso in her genealogy,) Eva, the daughter of a thousand chiefs. May she never quit the tents of her race! May she always ride upon Nejid steeds and dromedaries with harness of silver! May she live among us for ever! May she show herself to the people like a free Arabian maiden!"

"They are the thoughts of truth," said the delighted Bedoueens to one another, "every word is a pearl."

And the Great Sheikh sent a slave to express his wish that Eva and her maidens should appear. So she came to listen to the ode which the poet had composed in her honour. He had seen palm trees, but they were not as tall and graceful as Eva; he had beheld the eyes of doves and antelopes, but they were not as bright and soft as hers; he had tasted the fresh springs in the wilderness, but they were not more welcome than she, and the soft splendor of the desert moon was not equal to her brow. She was the daughter of Amalek, the daughter of a thousand chiefs. Might she live for ever in their

tents, ever ride on Nejid steeds and on dromedaries with silver harness; ever show herself to the people like a free Arabian maiden.

The poet, after many variations on this theme, ceased amid great plaudits.

"He is a true poet," said an Arab who was, like most of his brethren, a critic; "he is in truth a second Antar."

"If he had recited these verses before the King of Persia, he would have given him a thousand camels," replied his neighbour, gravely.

"They ought to be suspended in the temple of Mecca," said a third.

"What I most admire is his image of the full moon — that cannot be too often introduced," said a fourth.

"Truly the moon should ever shine," said a fifth. "Also in all truly fine verses there should be palm trees and fresh springs."

Tancred, to whom Baroni had conveyed the meaning of the verses, was also pleased: having observed that on a previous occasion the Great Sheikh had rewarded the bard, Tancred ventured to take a chain, which he fortunately chanced to wear, from his neck, and sent it to the poet of Eva. This made a great sensation, and highly delighted the Arabs.

"Truly this is the brother of queens," they whispered to each other.

Now the audience was breaking up and dispersing, and

Tancred, rising, begged permission of his host to approach Eva, who was seated at the entrance of the pavilion, somewhat withdrawn from them.

"If I were a poet," said Tancred, bending before her, "I would attempt to express my gratitude to the Lady of Bethany. I hope," he added, after a moment's pause, "that Baroni laid my message at your feet; when I begged your permission to thank you in person to-morrow, I had not imagined that I should have been so wilful as to quit the tent to-night."

"It will not harm you," said Eva; "our Arabian nights bear balm."

"I feel it," said Tancred; "this evening will complete the cure you so benignantly commenced."

"Mine were slender knowledge and simple means," said Eva, "but I rejoice that they were of use, more especially as I learn that we are all interested in your pilgrimage."

"The Emir Fakredeen has spoken to you?" said Tancred, inquiringly, and with a countenance a little agitated.

"He has spoken to me of some things, for which our previous conversation had not entirely unprepared me."

"Ah!" said Tancred, musingly, "our previous conversation. It is not very long ago since I slumbered by the side of your fountain, and yet it seems to me an age — an age of thought and events."

"Yet even then your heart was turned towards our unhappy Asia!" said the Lady of Bethany.

"Unhappy Asia! Do you call it unhappy Asia! This land

of divine deeds and divine thoughts! Its slumber is more vital than the waking life of the rest of the globe, as the dream of genius is more precious than the vigils of ordinary men. Unhappy Asia, do you call it? It is the unhappiness of Europe over which I mourn."

"Europe, that has conquered Hindostan, protects Persia and Asia Minor, affects to have saved Syria," said Eva, with some bitterness. "Oh! what can we do against Europe!"

"Save it," said Tancred.

"We cannot save ourselves; what means have we to save others?"

"The same you have ever exercised — divine truth. Send forth a great thought, as you have done before — from Mount Sinai, from the villages of Galilee, from the deserts of Arabia — and you may again remodel all their institutions, change their principles of action, and breathe a new spirit into the whole scope of their existence."

"I have sometimes dreamed such dreams," murmured Eva, looking down. "No, no," she exclaimed, raising her head, after a moment's pause — "it is impossible. Europe is too proud, with its new command over nature, to listen even to prophets. Levelling mountains, riding without horses, sailing without winds — how can these men believe that there is any power, human or divine, superior to themselves?"

"As for their command over nature," said Tancred, "let *us see* how it will operate in a second deluge. Command over

nature! Why, the humblest root that serves for the food of man has mysteriously withered throughout Europe, and they are already pale at the possible consequences. This slight eccentricity of that nature, which they boast they can command, has already shaken empires, and may decide the fate of nations. No, gentle lady, Europe is not happy. Amid its false excitement, its bustling invention, and its endless toil, a profound melancholy broods over its spirit and gnaws at its heart. In vain they baptise their tumult by the name of progress; the whisper of a demon is ever asking them, 'Progress from whence and to what?' Excepting those who still cling to your Arabian creeds, Europe — that quarter of the globe to which God has never spoken — Europe is without consolation."

CHAPTER X.

THREE or four days had elapsed since the departure of Fakredeen, and during each of them Tancred saw Eva; indeed, his hours were very much passed in the pavilion of the Great Sheikh, and, though he was never alone with the daughter of Besso, the language which they spoke, unknown to those about them, permitted them to confer without restraint on those subjects in which they were interested. Tancred opened his mind without reserve to Eva, for he liked to test the soundness of his conclusions by her clear intelligence. Her lofty spirit harmonized with his own high-toned soul. He found both sympathy and inspiration in her heroic purposes. Her passionate love of her race, her deep faith in the destiny and genius of her Asian land, greatly interested him. To his present position she referred occasionally, but with reluctance; it seemed as if she thought it unkind entirely to pass it over, yet that to be reminded of it was not satisfactory. Of Fakredeen she spoke much and frequently. She expressed with frankness, even with warmth, her natural and deep regard for him, the interest she took in his career, and the high opinion she entertained of his powers; but she lamented his inventive restlessness, which often arrested action, and intimated how much he might

profit by the counsels of a friend more distinguished for consistency and sternness of purpose.

In the midst of all this, Fakredeen returned. He came in the early morning, and immediately repaired to the pavilion of the Great Sheikh, with whom he was long closeted. Baroni first brought the news to Tancred, and subsequently told him that the quantity of nargillies smoked by the young Emir indicated not only a prolonged, but a difficult controversy. Some time after this, Tancred, lounging in front of his tent, and watching the shadows as they stole over the mountain tombs, observed Fakredeen issue from the pavilion of Amalek. His flushed and radiant countenance would seem to indicate good news. As he recognised Tancred, he saluted him in the Eastern fashion, hastily touching his heart, his lip, and his brow: when he had reached Tancred, Fakredeen threw himself in his arms, and, embracing him, whispered in an agitated voice on the breast of Lord Montacute, "Friend of my heart, you are free!"

In the mean time, Amalek announced to his tribe that at sunset the encampment would break up, and they would commence their return to the Syrian wilderness, through the regions eastward of the Dead Sea. The Lady Eva would accompany them, and the children of Rechab were to have the honour of escorting her and her attendants to the gates of Damascus. A detachment of five-and-twenty Beni-Rechab were to accompany Fakredeen and Tancred, Hassan and his Jellaheens in a contrary direction of the desert, until they

arrived at Gaza, where they were to await further orders from the young Emir.

No sooner was this intelligence circulated, than the silence which had pervaded the desert ruins at once ceased. Men came out of every tent and tomb. All was bustle and noise. They chattered, they sang, they talked to their horses, they apprised their camels of the intended expedition. They declared that the camels had consented to go; they anticipated a prosperous journey; they speculated on what tribes they might encounter.

It required all the consciousness of great duties, all the inspiration of a great purpose, to sustain Tancred under this sudden separation from Eva. Much he regretted that it was not also his lot to traverse the Syrian wilderness, but it was not for him to interfere with arrangements which he could neither control nor comprehend. All that passed amid the ruins of this desert city was as incoherent and restless as the incidents of a dream; yet not without the bright passages of strange fascination, which form part of the mosaic of our slumbering reveries. At dawn, a prisoner, at noon a free man, yet still, from his position, unable to move without succour, and without guides; why he was captured, how he was enfranchised, alike mysteries; Tancred yielded without a struggle to the management of that individual who was clearly master of the situation. Fakredeen decided upon everything, and no one was inclined to impugn the decrees *of him whose* rule commenced by conferring freedom.

It was only half an hour to sunset. The advanced guard of the children of Rechab, mounted on their dromedaries, and armed with lances, had some hours ago quitted the ruins. The camels, laden with the tents and baggage, attended by a large body of foot men with matchlocks, and who, on occasion, could add their own weight to the burden of their charge, were filing through the mountains; some horsemen were galloping about the plain and throwing the jereed; a considerable body, most of them dismounted, but prepared for the seat, were collected by the river side; about a dozen steeds of the purest race, one or two of them caparisoned, and a couple of dromedaries, were picketed before the pavilion of the Great Sheikh, which was not yet struck, and about which some grooms were squatted, drinking coffee, and every now and then turning to the horses, and addressing them in tones of the greatest affection and respect.

Suddenly one of the grooms jumped up and said, "He comes," and then going up to a bright bay mare, whose dark prominent eye equalled in brilliancy, and far exceeded in intelligence, the splendid orbs of the antelope, he addressed her, and said, "O Diamond of Derayeh, the princes of the desert can alone ride on thee!"

There came forth from his pavilion the great Amalek, accompanied by some of his sheikhs; there came forth from the pavilion Eva, attended by her gigantic Nubian and her maidens; there came forth from the pavilion the Emir Fakredeen and Lord Montacute.

"There is but one God," said the Great Sheikh as he pressed his hand to his heart, and bade farewell to the Emir and his late prisoner. "May he guard over us all!"

"Truly, there is but one God," echoed the attendant sheikhs. "May you find many springs!"

The maidens were placed on their dromedaries; the grooms, as if by magic, had already struck the pavilion of their Sheikh, and were stowing it away on the back of a camel; Eva, first imprinting on the neck of the mare a gentle embrace, vaulted into the seat of the Diamond of Derayeh, which she rode in the fashion of Zenobia. To Tancred, with her inspired brow, her cheek slightly flushed, her undulating figure, her eye proud of its dominion over the beautiful animal which moved its head with haughty satisfaction at its destiny, Eva seemed the impersonation of some young classic hero going forth to conquer a world.

Striving to throw into her countenance and the tones of her voice a cheerfulness which was really at this moment strange to them, she said, "Farewell, Fakredeen!" and then, after a moment's hesitation, and looking at Tancred with a faltering glance which yet made his heart tremble, she added, "Farewell, Pilgrim of Sinai."

CHAPTER XI.

THE Emir of the Lebanon and his English friend did not depart from the desert city until the morrow, Fakredeen being so wearied by his journey that he required repose. Unsustained by his lively conversation, Tancred felt all the depression natural to his position; and, restless and disquieted, wandered about the valley in the moonlight, recalling the vanished images of the past. After some time, unable himself to sleep, and finding Baroni disinclined to slumber, he reminded his attendant of the promise he had once given at Jerusalem, to tell something of his history. Baroni was a lively narrator, and, accompanied by his gestures, his speaking glance, and all the pantomime of his energetic and yet controlled demeanour, the narrative, as he delivered it, would have been doubtless much more amusing than the calmer form in which, upon reflection, we have thought fit to record some incidents, which the reader must not in any degree suppose to form merely an episode in this history. With this observation, we solicit attention to

THE HISTORY OF THE BARONI FAMILY;
BEING A CHAPTER IN THE LIFE OF SIDONIA.

I.

"I had no idea that you had a garrison here," said Sidonia, as the distant sounds of martial music were wafted down

a long, ancient street, that seemed narrower than it was from the great elevation of its fantastically-shaped houses, into the principal square in which was situate his hotel. The town was one of the least frequented of Flanders; and Sidonia, who was then a youth, scarcely of twenty summers, was on his rambling way to Frankfort, where he then resided.

"It is not the soldiers," said the Flemish maiden in attendance, and who was dressed in one of those pretty black silk jackets that seem to blend so well with the sombre yet picturesque dwellings of the Spanish Netherlands. "It is not the soldiers, Sir; it is only the Baroni family."

"And who are the Baroni family?"

"They are Italians, Sir, and have been here this week past, giving some representations."

"Of what kind?

"I hardly know, Sir, only I have heard that they are very beautiful. There is tumbling, I know for certain, and there was the Plagues of Egypt; but I believe it changes every night."

"And you have not yet seen them?"

"Oh no, Sir, it is not for such as me; the second places are half a franc!"

"And what is your name?" said Sidonia.

"Therese; at your service, Sir."

"You shall go and see the Baroni family to-night, Therese, if your mistress will let you."

"I am sure she would if you would ask her, Sir," said

Therese, looking down and colouring with delight. The little jacket seemed very agitated.

"Here they come!" said Sidonia, looking out of the window on the great square.

A man, extremely good-looking and well made, in the uniform of a marshal of France, his cocked hat fringed and plumed, and the colour of his coat almost concealed by its embroidery, played a clarionet like a master; four youths of a tender age, remarkable both for their beauty and their grace, dressed in very handsome scarlet uniforms, with white scarfs, performed upon French horns and similar instruments with great energy and apparent delight; behind them an honest Blouse, hired for the occasion, beat the double drum.

"Two of them are girls," said Therese; "and they are all the same family, except the drummer, who belongs, I hear, to Ypres. Sometimes there are six of them — two little ones, who, I suppose, are left at home to-day; they look quite like little angels; the boy plays the triangle and his sister beats a tambourin."

"They are great artists," murmured Sidonia to himself, as he listened to their performance of one of Donizetti's finest compositions. The father stood in the centre of the great square—the other musicians formed a circle round him; they continued their performance for about ten minutes to a considerable audience, many of whom had followed them, while the rest had collected at their appearance. There was an inclination in the curious multitude to press around the young

performers, who would have been in a great degree hidden from general view by this discourteous movement, and even the sound of their instruments in some measure suppressed. Sidonia marked with interest the calm and commanding manner with which, under these circumstances, the father controlled the people. They yielded in an instant to his will: one tall blacksmith seemed scarcely to relish his somewhat imperious demeanour, and stood rooted to the ground; but Baroni, placing only one hand on the curmudgeon's brawny shoulder, while he still continued playing on his instrument with the other, whirled him away like a puppet. The multitude laughed, and, the disconcerted blacksmith slunk away.

When the air was finished, Baroni took off his grand hat, and in a loud voice addressed the assembled people, informing them that this evening, in the largest room of the Auberge of St. Nicholas, there would be a variety of entertainments, consisting of master-pieces of strength and agility, dramatic recitations, dancing and singing, to conclude with the mystery of the Crucifixion of our blessed Lord and Saviour; in which all the actors in that memorable event — among others the blessed Virgin, the blessed St. Mary Magdalene, the Apostles, Pontius Pilate, the High Priest of the Jews, and many others, would appear, all to be represented by one family.

The speaker having covered himself, the band again formed and passed the window of Sidonia's hotel, followed by a stream of idle amateurs. animated by the martial strain, and attracted by the pleasure of hearing another fine perform-

ance at the next quarter of the town, where the Baroni family might halt to announce the impending amusements of the evening.

The moon was beginning to glitter, when Sidonia threw his cloak around him, and asked the way to the Auberge of St. Nicholas. It was a large, ungainly, whitewashed house, at the extremity of a suburb where the straggling street nearly ceased, and emptied itself into what in England would have been called a green. The many windows flared with lights, the doorway was filled with men smoking, and looking full of importance, as if, instead of being the usual loungers of the tavern, they were about to perform a principal part in the exhibition; they made way with respectful and encouraging ceremony to any one who entered to form part of the audience, and rated with sharp words, and sometimes a ready cuff, a mob of little boys who besieged the door, and implored every one who entered to give them tickets to see the Crucifixion. "It 's the last piece," they perpetually exclaimed, "and we may come in for five sous a-head."

Sidonia mounted the staircase, and being a suitor for a ticket for the principal seats, was received with a most gracious smile by a pretty woman, fair-faced and arch, with a piquant nose, and a laughing blue eye, who sat at the door of the room. It was a long and rather narrow apartment; at the end a stage of rough planks, before a kind of curtain, the whole rudely but not niggardly lighted. Unfortunately for the Baroni family, Sidonia found himself the only first-class

spectator. There was a tolerable sprinkling of those who paid half a franc for their amusement. These were separated from the first row, which Sidonia alone was to occupy: in the extreme distance was a large space not fitted up with benches, where the miscellaneous multitude, who could summon up five sous a-piece later in the evening, to see the Crucifixion, were to be stowed.

"It hardly pays the lights," said the pretty woman at the door. "We have not had good fortune in this town. It seems hard, when there is so much for the money, and the children take such pains in going the rounds in the morning."

"And you are Madame Baroni?" said Sidonia.

"Yes; I am the mother," she replied.

"I should have thought you had been their sister," said Sidonia.

"My eldest son is fifteen! I often wish that he was anything else but what he is, but we do not like to separate. We are all one family, Sir, and that makes us bear many things."

"Well, I think I know a way to increase your audience," said Sidonia.

"Indeed! I am sure it is very kind of you to say so much; we have not met with a gentleman like you the whole time we have been here."

Sidonia descended the stairs; the smoking amateurs made way for him with great parade, and pushed back with equal unkindness the young and wistful throng who still hovered round the portal.

"Don't you see the gentleman wants to go by? Get back, you boys!"

Sidonia halted on the doorway, and, taking advantage of a momentary pause, said, "All the little boys are to come in free."

What a rush!

The performances commenced by the whole of the Baroni family appearing in a row, and bowing to the audience. The father was now dressed in a Greek costume, which exhibited to perfection his compact frame: he looked like the captain of a band of Palikari; on his left appeared the mother, who, having thrown off her cloak, seemed a sylph or a sultana, for her bonnet had been succeeded by a turban. The three girls were on her left hand and on the right of her husband were their three brothers. The eldest son, Francis, resembled his father, or rather was what his father must have been in all the freshness of boyhood; the same form of blended strength and symmetry; the same dark eye, the same determined air and regular features which in time would become strongly marked; the second boy, Alfred, about eleven, was delicate, fair, and fragile, like his mother, his sweet countenance full of tenderness, changed before the audience with a rapid emotion; the youngest son, Michel, was an infant of four years, and with his large blue eyes and long golden hair, might have figured as one of the seraphs of Murillo.

There was analogy in the respective physical appearances of the brothers and the sisters. The eldest girl, Josephine,

though she had only counted twelve summers, was in stature, and almost in form, a woman. She was strikingly handsome, very slender, and dark as night. Adelaide, in colour, in look, in the grace of every gesture and in the gushing tenderness of her wild, yet shrinking glance, seemed the twin of Alfred. The little Carlotta, more than two years older than Michel, was the miniature of her mother, and had a piquant coquettish air, mixed with an expression of repose in one so young quite droll, like a little opera dancer. The father clapped his hands, and all, except himself, turned round, bowed to the audience and retired, leaving Baroni and his two elder children. Then commenced a variety of feats of strength. Baroni stretched forth his right arm, and Josephine, with a bound, instantly sprang upon his shoulder; while she thus remained, balancing herself only on her left leg, and looking like a flying Victory, her father stretched forth his left arm and Francis sprang upon the shoulder opposite to his sister, and formed with her a group which might have crowned a vase. Infinite were the postures into which, for more than half an hour, the brother and sister threw their flexible forms, and all alike distinguished for their agility, their grace, and their precision. At length, all the children, with the exception of Carlotta, glided from behind the curtain, and clustered around their father with a quickness which baffled observation. Alfred and Adelaide suddenly appeared mounted upon Josephine and Francis, who had already resumed their former positions on the shoulders of their father,

and stood immoveable with outstretched arms, while their brother and sister balanced themselves above. This being arranged, Baroni caught up the young Michel, and, as it were, flung him up on high; Josephine received the urchin, and tossed him up to Adelaide, and in a moment the beautiful child was crowning the living pyramid, his smiling face nearly touching the rough ceiling of the chamber, and clapping his little hands with practised triumph, as Baroni walked about the stage with the breathing burden.

He stopped, and the children disappeared from his shoulders, like birds from a tree when they hear a sound. He clapped his hands, they turned round, bowed, and vanished.

"As this feat pleases you," said the father, "and as we have a gentleman here to-night who has proved himself a liberal patron of artists, I will show you something that I rarely exhibit; I will hold the whole of the Baroni family with my two hands;" and hereupon addressing some stout-looking fellows among his audience, he begged them to come forward and hold each end of a plank that was leaning against the wall, one which had not been required for the quickly-constructed stage. This they did with some diffidence, and with that air of constraint characteristic of those who have been summoned from a crowd to perform something which they do not exactly comprehend.

"Be not afraid, my good friends," said Baroni to them, as Francis lightly sprang on one end, and Josephine on the

other of the plank; then Alfred and Adelaide skipped up together at equal distances; so that the four children were now standing in attitude upon the same basis, which four stout men endeavoured with difficulty to keep firm. At that moment Madame Baroni with the two young children came from behind the curtain, and vaulted exactly on the middle of the board, so that the bold Michel on the one side, and the demure Carlotta on the other, completed the group. "Thank you, my friends," said Baroni, slipping under the plank, which was raised to a height which just admitted him to pass under it, "I will release you," and with his outstretched hands he sustained the whole burthen — the whole of the Baroni family supported by the father.

After this there was a pause of a few minutes, the stage was cleared, and Baroni, in a loose great coat, appeared at its side with a violin. He played a few bars, then turning to the audience, said with the same contemptuous expression, which always distinguished him when he addressed them, "Now you are going to hear a scene from a tragedy of the great Racine, one of the greatest tragedy-writers that ever existed, if you may never have heard of him; but if you were at Paris and went to the great theatre you would find that what I am telling you is true." And Josephine advanced, warmly cheered by the spectators, who thought that they were going to have some more tumbling. She advanced however as Andromache. It seemed to Sidonia that he had never listened to a voice more rich and passionate, to an elocution more

complete; he gazed with admiration on her lightning glance and all the tumult of her noble brow. As she finished, he applauded her with vehemence. He was standing near to her father, leaning against the wall.

"Your daughter is a great actress," he said to Baroni.

"I sometimes think so," said the father, turning round with some courtesy to Sidonia, whom he recognised as the liberal stranger who had so kindly increased his meagre audience; "I let her do this to please herself. She is a good girl — but very few of the respectable savages here speak French. However, she likes it. Adelaide is now going to sing; that will suit them better."

Then there were a few more bars scraped on the violin, and Adelaide, glowing rather than blushing, with her eyes first on the ground and then on the ceiling, but in all her movements ineffable grace, came forward and courteseyed. She sang an air of Auber and of Bellini; a voice of the rarest quality, and it seemed to Sidonia, promising almost illimitable power.

"Your family is gifted," he said to Baroni, as he applauded his second daughter as warmly as the first; and the audience applauded her too.

"I sometimes think so. They are all very good. I am afraid, however, that this gift will not serve her much. The good-natured savages seem pleased. Carlotta now is going to dance; that will suit them better. She has had good instruction. Her mother was a dancer."

And immediately, with her lip a little curling, a look of

complete self-possession, willing to be admired, yet not caring to conceal her disgust, the little Carlotta advanced, and, after pointing her toe, threw a glance at her father to announce that he might begin. He played with more care and energy than for the other sisters, for Carlotta was exceedingly wilful and imperious, and, if the music jarred, would often stop, shrug her shoulders, and refuse to proceed. Her mother doted on her; even the austere Baroni, who ruled his children like a Pacha, though he loved them, was a little afraid of Carlotta.

The boards were coarse and rough, some even not sufficiently tightened, but it seemed to Sidonia, experienced as he was in the schools of Paris, London, and Milan, that he had never witnessed a more brilliant facility than that now displayed by this little girl. Her soul too was entirely in her art; her countenance generally serious and full of thought, yet occasionally, when a fine passage had been successfully achieved, radiant with triumph and delight. She was cheered, and cheered, and cheered; but treated the applause, when she retired, with great indifference. Fortunately, Sidonia had a rose in his button-hole, and he stepped forward and presented it to her. This gratified Carlotta, who bestowed on him a glance full of coquetry.

"And now," said Baroni to the people, "you are going to see the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ: all the tableaux are taken from pictures by the most famous artists that ever lived — Raphael, Rubens, and others. Probably you never heard of them. I can't help that; it is not my fault; all I can say is,

that if you go to the Vatican and other galleries you may see them. There will be a pause of ten minutes, for the children want rest."

Now there was a stir and a devouring of fruit; Baroni, who was on the point of going behind the curtain, came forward, and there was silence again to listen to him.

"I understand," he said, roughly, "there is a collection going to be made for the children; mind, I ask no one to subscribe to it; no one obliges me by giving anything to it; it is for the children and the children alone, they have it to spend, that is all."

The collectors were Michel and Adelaide. Michel was always successful at a collection. He was a great favourite, and wonderfully bold; he would push about in the throng like a Hercules, whenever any one called out to him to fetch a liard. Adelaide, who carried the box, was much too retiring, and did not like the business at all, but it was her turn, and she could not avoid it. No one gave them more than a sous. It is due, however, to the little boys who were admitted free to state that they contributed very handsomely; indeed, they expended all the money they had in the exhibition room, either in purchasing fruit, or in bestowing backsheesh on the performers.

"Encore un liard pour Michel," was called out by several of them, in order to make Michel rush back, which he did instantly at the exciting sound, ready to overwhelm the hugest men in his resistless course.

At last Adelaide, holding the box in one hand and her

brother by the other, came up to Sidonia, and cast her eyes upon the ground.

"For Michel," said Sidonia, dropping a five-france piece into the box.

"A piece of a hundred sous!" said Michel.

"And a piece of a hundred sous for yourself and each of your brothers and sisters, Adelaide," said Sidonia, giving her a purse.

Michel gave a shout, but Adelaide blushed very much, kissed his hand, and skipped away. When she had got behind the curtain, she jumped on her father's neck, and burst into tears. Madame Baroni, not knowing what had occurred, and observing that Sidonia could command from his position a view of what was going on in their sanctuary, pulled the curtain, and deprived Sidonia of a scene which interested him.

About ten minutes after this, Baroni again appeared in his rough great coat, and with his violin. He gave a scrape or two, and the audience became orderly. He played an air, and then turning to Sidonia, looking at him with great scrutiny, he said, "Sir, you are a prince."

"On the contrary," said Sidonia, "I am nothing; I am only an artist like yourself."

"Ah!" said Baroni, "an artist like myself! I thought so. You have taste. And what is your line? Some great theatre I suppose, where even if one is ruined, one at least has *the* command of capital. 'T is a position. I have none

But I have no rebels in my company, no traitors. With one mind and heart we get on — and yet sometimes —" and here a signal near him reminded him that he must be playing another air, and in a moment, the curtain separated in the middle, and exhibited a circular stage on which there were various statues representing the sacred story.

There were none of the usual means and materials of illusion at hand; neither space, nor distance, nor cunning lights; it was a confined tavern room with some glaring tapers, and Sidonia himself was almost within arm's reach of the performers. Yet a representation more complete, more finely conceived and more perfectly executed, he had never witnessed. It was impossible to credit that these marble forms, impressed with ideal grace, so still, so sad, so sacred, could be the little tumblers, who, but half an hour before, were disporting on the coarse boards at his side.

The father always described, before the curtain was withdrawn, with a sort of savage terseness, the subject of the impending scene. The groups did not continue long; a pause of half a minute, and the circular stage revolved, and the curtain again closed. This rapidity of representation was necessary, lest delay should compromise the indispensable immoveableness of the performers.

"Now," said Baroni, turning his head to the audience, and slightly touching his violin, "Christ falls under the weight of the cross." And immediately the curtain parted, and Sidonia beheld a group in the highest style of art, and which,

though deprived of all the magic of colour, almost expressed the passion of Correggio.

"It is Alfred," said Baroni, as Sidonia evinced his admiration. "He chiefly arranges all this, under my instructions. In drapery his talent is remarkable."

At length, after a series of representations, which were all worthy of being exhibited in the pavilions of princes, Baroni announced the last scene.

"What you are going to see now is the Descent from the Cross; it is after Rubens, one of the greatest masters that ever lived — if you ever heard of such a person," he added in a grumbling voice, and then turning to Sidonia, he said, "This Crucifixion is the only thing which these savages seem at all to understand, but I should like you, Sir, as you are an artist, to see the children in some Greek or Roman story: Pygmalion, or the Death of Agrippina. I think you would be pleased."

"I cannot be more pleased than I am now," said Sidonia. "I am also astonished."

But here Baroni was obliged to scrape his fiddle, for the curtain moved.

"It is a triumph of art," said Sidonia, as he beheld the immortal group of Rubens reproduced with a precision, and an exquisite feeling which no language can sufficiently convey, or too much extol.

The performances were over, the little artists were sum-

moned to the front scene to be applauded, the scanty audience were dispersing: Sidonia lingered.

"You are living in this house, I suppose?" he said to Baroni.

Baroni shook his head, "I can afford no roof except my own."

"And where is that"

"On four wheels, on the green here. We are vagabonds, and I suppose must always be so, but, being one family, we can bear it. I wish the children to have a good supper to-night, in honour of your kindness. I have a good deal to do. I must put these things in order," — as he spoke he was working — "there is the grandmother who lives with us; all this time she is alone, guarded however by the dog. I should like them to have meat to-night, if I can get it. Their mother cooks the supper. Then I have got to hear them say their prayers. All this takes time, particularly as we have to rise early, and do many things before we make our first course through the city."

"I will come and see you to-morrow," said Sidonia, "after your first progress."

"An hour after noon, if you please," said Baroni. "It is pleasant for me to become acquainted with a fellow artist, and one so liberal as yourself."

"Your name is Baroni," said Sidonia, looking at him earnestly.

"My name is Baroni."

"An Italian name."

"Yes, I come from Cento."

"Well, we shall meet to-morrow. Good night, Baroni. I am going to send you some wine for your supper, and take care the grandmamma drinks my health."

II.

It was a sunny morn: upon the green contiguous to the auberge of St. Nicholas was a house upon wheels, a sort of monster omnibus, its huge shafts idle on the ground, while three fat Flemish horses cropped the surrounding pasture. From the door of the house were some temporary steps, like an accommodation ladder, on which sat Baroni, dressed something like a Neapolitan fisherman, and mending his clarionet; the man in the blouse was eating his dinner, seated between the shafts, to which also was fastened the little dog, often the only garrison, except the grandmother, of this strange establishment.

The little dog began barking vociferously, and Baroni, looking up, instantly bade him be quiet. It was Sidonia, whose appearance in the distance had roused the precautionary voice.

"Well," said Sidonia, "I heard your trumpets this morning."

"The grandmother sleeps," said Baroni, taking off his *cap*, and slightly rising. "The rest also are lying down after

their dinner. Children will never repose unless there are rules, and this with them is invariable."

"But your children surely cannot be averse to repose, for they require it."

"Their blood is young," continued Baroni, still mending his clarionet; "they are naturally gay, except my eldest son. He is restless, but he is not gay."

"He likes his art?"

"Not too much; what he wants is to travel, and, after all, though we are always moving, the circle is limited."

"Yes; you have many to move. And can this ark contain them all?" said Sidonia, seating himself on some timber that was at hand.

"With convenience even," replied Baroni; "but everything can be effected by order and discipline. I rule and regulate my house like a ship. In a vessel, there is not as much accommodation for the size as in a house of this kind; yet nowhere is there more decency and cleanliness than on board ship."

"You have an obedient crew," said Sidonia, "and that is much."

"Yes; when they wake, my children say their prayers, and then they come to embrace me and their mother. This they have never omitted during their lives. I have taught them from their birth to obey God and to honour their parents. These two principles have made them a religious and a moral

family. They have kept us united, and sustained us under severe trials."

"Yet such talents as you all possess," said Sidonia, "should have exempted you from any very hard struggle, especially when united, as apparently in your case, with well-ordered conduct."

"It would seem that they should," said Baroni, "but less talents than we possess would probably obtain as high a reward. The audiences that we address have little feeling for art, and all these performances, which you so much applauded last night, would not perhaps secure even the feeble patronage we experience, if they were not preceded by some feats of agility or strength."

"You have never appealed to a higher class of audience?"

"No; my father was a posture-master, as his father was before him. These arts are traditionary in our family, and I care not to say for what length of time and from what distant countries we believe them to have been received by us. My father died by a fall from a tight rope in the midst of a grand illumination at Florence, and left me a youth. I count now only six and thirty summers. I married, as soon as I could, a dancer at Milan. We had no capital, but our united talents found success. We loved our children; it was necessary to act with decision, or we should have been separated and trampled into the mud. Then I devised this house and wandering life, and we exist in general as you see us. In *the winter,* if our funds permit it, we reside in some city,

where we educate our children in the arts which they pursue. The mother can still dance, sings prettily, and has some knowledge of music. For myself, I can play in some fashion upon every instrument, and have almost taught them as much; I can paint, too, a scene, compose a group, and with the aid of my portfolio of prints, have picked up more knowledge of the costume of different centuries than you would imagine. If you see Josephine to-night in the Maid of Orleans you would perhaps be surprised. A great judge, like yourself a real artist, once told me at Bruxelles, that the grand opera could not produce its equal."

"I can credit it," said Sidonia, "for I perceive in Josephine, as well as indeed in all your children, a rare ability."

"I will be frank," said Baroni, looking at Sidonia very earnestly, and laying down his clarionet. "I conclude from what you said last night, and the interest that you take in the children, that you are something in our way, though on a great scale. I apprehend you are looking out for novelties for the next season, and sometimes in the provinces things are to be found. If you will take us to London or Paris, I will consent to receive no remuneration if the venture fail: all I shall then require will be a decent maintenance, which you can calculate beforehand; if the speculation answer, I will not demand more than a third of the profits, leaving it to your own liberality to make me any regalo in addition, that you think proper."

"A very fair proposal," said Sidonia.

"Is it a bargain?"

"I must think over it," said Sidonia.

"Well; God prosper your thoughts, for from what I see of you, you are a man I should be proud to work with."

"Well, we may yet be comrades."

The children appeared at the door of the house, and, not to disturb their father, vaulted down. They saluted Sidonia with much respect, and then withdrew to some distance. The mother appeared at the door, and, leaning down, whispered something to Baroni, who, after a little hesitation, said to Sidonia, "The grandmother is awake; she has a wish to thank you for your kindness to the children. It will not trouble you; merely a word; but women have their fancies, and we like always to gratify her, because she is much alone and never complains."

"By all means," said Sidonia.

Whereupon they ushered forward a venerable woman with a true Italian face; hair white as snow and eyes still glittering with fire, with features like a Roman bust, and an olive complexion. Sidonia addressed her in Italian, which greatly pleased her. She was profuse, even solemn in her thanks to him; she added she was sure, from all that she had heard of him, if he took the children with him, he would be kind to them.

"She has overheard something I said to my wife," said Baroni, a little embarrassed.

"I am sure I should be kind to them," said Sidonia, "for many reasons, and particularly for one;" and he whispered something in Baroni's ear.

Baroni started from his seat with a glowing cheek, but Sidonia, looking at his watch and promising to attend their evening performance, bade them adieu.

III.

The performances were more meagerly attended this evening than even on the preceding one, but had they been conducted in the royal theatre of a capital, they could not have been more elaborate, nor the troop have exerted themselves with greater order and effect. It mattered not a jot to them whether their benches were thronged or vacant; the only audience for whom the Baroni family cared was the foreign manager, young, generous, and speculative, whom they had evidently without intention already pleased, and whose good opinion they resolved to-night entirely to secure. And in this they perfectly succeeded. Josephine was a tragic muse; all of them, even to little Carlotta, performed, as if their destiny depended on the die. Baroni would not permit the children's box to be carried round to-night, as he thought it an unfair tax on the generous stranger, whom he did not the less please by this well-bred abstinence. As for the mediæval and historic groups, Sidonia could recall nothing equal to them; and what surprised him most was the effect produced by such miserable

materials. It seemed that the whole was effected with some stiffened linen and paper; but the divine touch of art turned everything to gold. One statue of Henri IV. with his flowing plume, and his rich romantic dress, was quite striking. It was the very plume that had won at Ivry, and yet was nothing more than a sheet of paper cut and twisted by the plastic finger of little Alfred.

There was to be no performance on the morrow; the niggard patronage of the town had been exhausted. Indeed, had it not been for Sidonia, the little domestic troop would, ere this, have quitted the sullen town, where they had laboured so finely, and achieved such an ungracious return. On the morrow, Baroni was to ride one of the fat horses over to Berg, a neighbouring town of some importance, where there was even a little theatre to be engaged, and if he obtained the permission of the mayor, and could make fair terms, he proposed to give there a series of representations. The mother was to stay at home and take care of the grandmother; but the children — all the children — were to have a holiday, and to dine with Sidonia at his hotel.

It would have been quite impossible for the most respectable burgher, even of the grand place of a Flemish city, to have sent his children on a visit in trim more neat, proper, and decorous, than that in which the Baroni family figured on the morrow, when they went to pay their respects to their patron. The girls were in clean white frocks with little black silk jackets, their hair beautifully tied and plaited, and their

heads uncovered, according to the fashion of the country; not an ornament, or symptom of tawdry taste was visible, not even a necklace, although they necessarily passed their lives in fanciful or grotesque attire; the boys, in foraging caps all of the same fashion, were dressed in blouses of holland, with bands and buckles, their broad shirt collars thrown over their shoulders. It is astonishing, as Baroni said, what order and discipline will do; but how that wonderful house upon wheels contrived to contain all these articles of dress, from the uniform of the marshal of France to the diminutive blouse of little Michel, and how their wearers always managed to issue from it, as if they came forth from the most commodious and amply-furnished mansion, was truly yet pleasingly perplexing. Sidonia took them all in a large landau to see a famous château a few miles off, full of pictures and rich old furniture, and built in famous gardens. This excursion would have been delightful to them, if only from its novelty, but, as a substitute for their daily progress through the town, it offered an additional gratification.

The behaviour of these children greatly interested and pleased Sidonia. Their conduct to each other was invariably tender and affectionate; their carriage to him, though full of respect, never constrained, and touched by an engaging simplicity. Above all, in whatever they did or said, there was grace. They did nothing awkwardly; their voices were musical; they were merry without noise, and their hearts sparkled in their eyes.

"I begin to suspect that these youthful vagabonds, struggling for life, have received a perfect education," thought the ever musing Sidonia, as he leaned back in the landau, and watched the group that he had made so happy. "A sublime religious principle sustains their souls; a tender morality regulates their lives; and with the heart and the spirit thus developed, they are brought up in the pursuit and production of the beautiful. It is the complete culture of philosophic dreams!"

IV.

The children had never sate down before to a regular dinner, and they told Sidonia so. Their confession added a zest to the repast. He gave them occasional instructions, and they listened as if they were receiving directions for a new performance. They were so quick and so tractable, that their progress was rapid; and at the second course Josephine was instructing Michel, and Alfred guiding the rather helpless but always self-composed Carlotta. After dinner, while Sidonia helped them to sugar-plums, he without effort extracted from each their master wish. Josephine desired to be an actress, while Adele confessed that, though she sighed for the boards, her secret aspirations were for the grand opera. Carlotta thought the world was made to dance.

"For my part," said Francis, the eldest son, "I have no wish to be idle; but there are two things which I have always

desired — first, that I should travel; and secondly, that nobody should ever know me."

"And what would Alfred wish to be?" said Sidonia.

"Indeed, Sir, if it did not take me from my brothers and sisters, I should certainly wish to be a painter."

"Michel has not yet found out what he wishes," said Sidonia.

"I wish to play upon the horn," said Michel, with great determination.

When Sidonia embraced them before their departure, he gave each of the girls a French shawl; to Francis he gave a pair of English pistols, to guard him when he travelled; Alfred received a portfolio full of drawings of costume. It only arrived after dinner, for the town was too poor to supply anything good enough for the occasion, and Sidonia had sent a special messenger, the day before, for it to Lille. Michel was the guardian of a basket laden with good things, which he was to have the pleasure of dividing among the Baroni family. "And if your papa come back to-night," said Sidonia to Josephine, "tell him I should like to have a word with him."

V.

Sidonia had already commenced that habit which, during subsequent years, he has so constantly and successfully pursued — namely, of enlisting in his service all the rare talent

which he found lying common and unappropriated in the great wilderness of the world; no matter if the object to which it would apply might not immediately be in sight. The conjuncture would arrive when it would be wanted. Thus he generally had ready the right person for the occasion; and whatever might be the transaction, the human instrument was rarely wanting. Independent of the power and advantage which this system gave him, his abstract interest in intellect made the pursuit delightful to him. He liked to give ability of all kinds its scope. Nothing was more apt to make him melancholy, than to hear of persons of talents dying without having their chance. A failure is nothing; it may be deserved, or it may be remedied. In the first instance, it brings self-knowledge; in the second, it develops a new combination usually triumphant. But incapacity, from not having a chance of being capable, is a bitter lot, which Sidonia was ever ready to alleviate.

The elder Baroni possessed Herculean strength, activity almost as remarkable, a practised courage, and a controlling mind. He was in the prime of manhood, and spoke several languages. He was a man, according to Sidonia's views, of high moral principle; entirely trustworthy. He was too valuable an instrument to allow to run to seed as the strolling manager of a caravan of tumblers, and it is not improbable that Sidonia would have secured his services, even if he had not become acquainted with the Baroni family. But they charmed him. In every member of it he recognised

character, and a predisposition which might even be genius. He resolved that every one of them should have a chance.

When therefore Baroni, wearied and a little disgusted with an unpromising journey, returned from Berg in the evening, and, in consequence of the message of his children, repaired instantly to the hotel of Sidonia, his astonishment was great when he found the manager converted into a millionaire, and that too the most celebrated in Europe. But no language can convey his wonder when he learnt the career that was proposed to him and the fortunes that were carved out for his children. He himself was to repair, with all his family, except Josephine and her elder brother, at once to Vienna, where he was to be installed into a post of great responsibility and emolument. He was made superintendent of the couriers of the house of Sidonia in that capital, and especially of those that conveyed treasure. Though his duties would entail frequent absences on him, he was to be master of a constant and complete establishment. Alfred was immediately to become a pupil of the Academy of Painters, and Carlotta of that of dancing; the talents of Michel were to be watched and to be reported to Sidonia at fitting periods. As for Adele, she was consigned to a lady who had once been a celebrated prima donna, with whom she was to pursue her studies, although still residing under the paternal roof.

"Josephine will repair to Paris at once with her brother," said Sidonia. "My family will guard over her. She will

enjoy her brother's society until I commence my travels. He will then accompany me."

It is nearly twenty years since these incidents occurred, and perhaps the reader may not altogether feel uninterested in the subsequent fate of the children of Baroni. Mademoiselle Josephine is at this moment the glory of the French stage; without any question the most admirable tragic actress since Clairon, and inferior not even to her. The spirit of French tragedy has risen from the imperial couch, on which it had long slumbered, since her appearance, at the same time classical and impassioned, at once charmed and commanded the most refined audience in Europe. Adele, under the name of Madame Baroni, is the acknowledged Queen of Song in London, Paris, Berlin, and St. Petersburgh; while her younger sister, Carlotta Baroni, shares the triumphs, and equals the renown, of a Taglioni and a Cerito. At this moment, Madame Baroni performs to enthusiastic audiences in the first opera of her brother Michel, who promises to be the rival of Meyerbeer and Mendelssohn; all delightful intelligence to meet the ear of the soft-hearted Alfred, who is painting the new chambers of the Papal palace, a Cavaliere, decorated with many orders, and the restorer of the once famous Roman school.

"Thus," continued Baroni to Tancred, "we have all succeeded in life because we fell across a great philosopher, who studied our predisposition. As for myself, I told M. de Sido-

nia that I wished to travel and to be unknown, and so he made of me — a secret agent."

"There is something most interesting," said Tancred, "in this idea of a single family issuing from obscurity, and disseminating their genius through the world — charming mankind with so many spells. How fortunate for you all, that Sidonia had so much feeling for genius!"

"And some feeling for his race," said Baroni.

"How?" said Tancred, startled.

"You remember he whispered something in my father's ear?"

"I remember."

"He spoke it in Hebrew, and he was understood."

"You do not mean that you, too, are Jews?"

"Pure Sephardim, in nature and in name."

"But your name surely is Italian?"

"Good Arabic, my lord. Baroni — that is, the son of Aaron; the name of old clothesmen in London, and of Caliphs at Bagdad."

CHAPTER XII.

"How do you like my forest?" asked Fakredeen of Tancred, as, while descending a range of the Lebanon, an extensive valley opened before them, covered with oak trees, which clothed also with their stout trunks, their wide-spreading branches, and their rich starry foliage, the opposite and undulating hills, one of which was crowned with a convent. "It is the only oak forest in Syria. It will serve some day to build our fleet."

At Gaza, which they had reached by easy journeys, for Fakredeen was very considerate of the health of Tancred, whose wound had scarcely healed, and over whom he watched with a delicate solicitude which would have almost become a woman, the companions met Scheriff Effendi. The magic signature of Lord Montacute settled the long vexed question of the five thousand muskets, and secured also ten thousand piastres for the commander of the escort to deliver to his chief. The children of Rechab, in convoy of the precious charge, certain cases of which were to be delivered to the Great Sheikh, and the rest to be deposited in indicated quarters of the Lebanon, here took leave of the Emir and his friend, and pursued their course to the north of Hebron and the Dead Sea, in the direction of the Hauraan, where they *counted*, if not on overtaking the Great Sheikh, at least on

the additional security which his neighbourhood would insure them. Their late companions remained at Gaza, awaiting Tancred's yacht, which Baroni fetched from the neighbouring Jaffa. A favouring breeze soon carried them from Gaza to Beiroot, where they landed, and where Fakredeen had the politic pleasure of exhibiting his new and powerful ally, a prince, an English prince, the brother perhaps of a Queen, unquestionably the owner of a splendid yacht, to the admiring eye of all his, at the same time, credulous and rapacious creditors.

The air of the mountains invigorated Tancred. His eye had rested so long on the ocean and the desert, than the effect produced on the nerves by the forms and colours of a more varied nature were alone reviving.

There are regions more lofty than the glaciered crests of Lebanon; mountain scenery more sublime, perhaps even more beautiful: its peaks are not lost in the clouds like the mysterious Ararat; its forests are not as vast and strange as the towering Himalaya; it has not the volcanic splendour of the glowing Andes; in lake and in cataract it must yield to the European Alps; but for life, vigorous, varied, and picturesque, there is no highland territory in the globe than can for a moment compare with the great chain of Syria.

Man has fled from the rich and servile plains, from the tyranny of the Turk and from Arabian rapine, to clothe the crag with vines, and rest under his fig tree on the mountain

top. An ingenious spirit, unwearied industry, and a bland atmosphere have made a perpetual garden of the Syrian mountains. Their acclivities sparkle with terraces of corn and fruit. Castle and convent crown their nobler heights, and flat-roofed villages nestle amid groves of mulberry trees. Among these mountains we find several human races, several forms of government, and several schemes of religion, yet everywhere liberty — a proud, feudal aristocracy, a conventual establishment, which in its ramifications recalls the middle ages, a free and armed peasantry whatever their creed; Emirs on Arabian steeds, bishops worthy of the apostles, the Maronite monk, the horned head-gear of the Druses.

Some of those beautiful horses, for which Fakredeen was celebrated, had awaited the travellers at Beiroot. The journey through the mountain was to last three days before they reached Canobia. They halted one night at a mountain village where the young Emir was received with enthusiastic devotion, and on the next at a small castle belonging to Fakredeen, and where resided one of his kinsmen. Two hours before sunset, on the third day, they were entering the oak forest to which we referred, and through whose glades they journeyed for about half an hour. On arriving at the convent-crowned height opposite, they beheld an expanse of country; a small plain amid the mountains; in many parts richly cultivated, studded by several hamlets, and watered by a stream, winding amid rich shrubberies of oleander. Almost in the middle of this plain, on a height superior to the immediate elevations

which bounded it, rose a mountain of gradual ascent, covered with sycamores, and crowned by a superb Saracenic castle.

"Canobia!" said Fakredeen to Tancred, "which I hope you never will quit."

"It would be difficult," rejoined Tancred, animated. "I have seldom seen a sight more striking and more beautiful."

In the mean time, Freeman and Trueman, who were far in the rear amid Fakredeen's attendants, exchanged congratulating glances of blended surprise and approbation.

"This is the first gentleman's seat I have seen since we left England," said Freeman.

"There must have been a fine coming of age here," rejoined Trueman.

"As for that," replied Freeman, "comings of age depend in a manner upon meat and drink. They ayn't in noways to be carried out with coffee and pipes. Without oxen roasted whole, and broached hogsheads, they ayn't in a manner legal."

A horseman, who was a-head of the Emir and Tancred, now began beating with a stick on two small tabors, one on each side of his saddle, and thus announced to those who were already on the watch the approach of their lord. It was some time however before the road, winding through the sycamore trees and gradually ascending, brought them to the outworks of the castle, of which during their progress they enjoyed a variety of views. It was a very extensive pile, in

excellent condition, and apparently strongly fortified. A number of men in showy dresses and with ornamented arms, were clustered round the embattled gateway, which introduced the travellers into a quadrangle of considerable size, and of which the light and airy style pleasingly and suitably contrasted with the sterner and more massive character of the exterior walls. A fountain rose in the centre of the quadrangle which was surrounded by arcades. Ranged round this fountain, in a circle, were twenty saddled steeds of the highest race, each held by a groom, and each attended by a man-at-arms. All pressed their hands to their hearts as the Emir entered, but with a gravity of countenance which was never for a moment disturbed. Whether their presence were habitual or only for the occasion, it was unquestionably impressive. Here the travellers dismounted, and Fakredeen ushered Tancred through a variety of saloons of which the furniture, though simple, as becomes the East, was luxurious, and of its kind superb; floors of mosaic marbles, bright carpets, arabesque ceilings, walls of carved cedar, and broad divans of the richest stuffs of Damascus.

"And this divan is for you," said Fakredeen, showing Tancred into a chamber, which opened upon a flower-garden, shaded by lemon trees. "I am proud of my mirror," he added, with some exultation, as he called Tancred's attention to a large French looking-glass, the only one in Lebanon. "And this," added Fakredeen, leading Tancred through a suite of marble chambers, "this is your bath!"

In the centre of one chamber, fed by a perpetual fountain, was a large alabaster basin, the edges of which were strewn with flowers just culled. The chamber was entirely of porcelain; a golden flower on a ground of delicate green.

"I will send your people to you," said Fakredeen, "but, in the mean time, there are attendants here who are, perhaps, more used to the duty," and so saying, he clapped his hands, and several servants appeared bearing baskets of curious linen whiter than the snow of Lebanon, and a variety of robes.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

It has been long decreed that no poet may introduce the Phœnix. Scylla and Charybdis are both successfully avoided even by provincial rhetoric. The performance of Hamlet with the part of Hamlet omitted, and Mahomet's unhappy coffin — these are illustrations that have long been the prerogative of dolts and dullards. It is not for a moment to be tolerated that an oasis should be met with anywhere except in the desert.

We sadly lack a new stock of public images. The current similes, if not absolutely counterfeit, are quite worn out. They have no intrinsic value, and serve only as counters to represent the absence of ideas. The critics should really call them in. In the good old days, when the superscription was fresh, and the mint mark bright upon the metal, we should have compared the friendship of two young men to that of Damon and Pythias. These were individuals then still well known in polite society. If their examples have *ceased to influence*, it cannot be pretended that the extinction

of their authority has been the consequence of competition. Our enlightened age has not produced them any rivals.

Of all the differences between the ancients and ourselves, none more striking than our respective ideas of friendship. Grecian friendship was indeed so ethereal, that it is difficult to divine its essential qualities. They must be sought rather in the pages of Plato or the moral essays of Plutarch perhaps, and in some other books not quite as well known, but not less interesting and curious. As for modern friendship, it will be found in clubs. It is violent at a house dinner, fervent in a cigar shop, full of devotion at a cricket or a pigeon match, or in the gathering of a steeple chase. The nineteenth century is not entirely sceptical on the head of friendship, but fears 't is rare. A man may have friends, but then are they sincere ones? Do not they abuse you behind your back, and blackball you at societies where they have had the honour to propose you? It might philosophically be suggested that it is more agreeable to be abused behind one's back than to one's face; and, as for the second catastrophe, it should not be forgotten that, if the sincere friend may occasionally put a successful veto on your election, he is always ready to propose you again. Generally speaking, among sensible persons, it would seem that a rich man deems that friend a sincere one who does not want to borrow his money; while, among the less favoured with fortune's gifts, the sincere friend is generally esteemed to be the individual who is ready to lend it.

As we must not compare Tancred and Fakredeen to Damon and Pythias, and as we cannot easily find in Pall Mall or Park Lane a parallel more modish, we must be content to say that youth, sympathy, and occasion, combined to create between them that intimacy which each was prompt to recognise as one of the principal sources of his happiness, and which the young Emir, at any rate, was persuaded must be as lasting as it was fervent and profound.

Fakredeen was seen to great advantage among his mountains. He was an object of universal regard, and, anxious to maintain the repute of which he was proud, and which was to be the basis of his future power, it seemed that he was always in a gracious and engaging position. Brilliant, sumptuous, and hospitable, always doing something kind, or saying something that pleased, the Emirs and Sheikhs, both Maronite and Druse, were proud of the princely scion of their greatest house, and hastened to repair to Canobia, where they were welcome to ride any of his two hundred steeds, feast on his flocks, quaff his golden wine of Lebanon, or smoke the delicate tobaccoes of his celebrated slopes.

As for Tancred, his life was novel, interesting, and exciting. The mountain breezes soon restored his habitual health; his wound entirely healed; each day brought new scenes, new objects, new characters, and there was ever at his side a captivating companion, who lent additional interest to all he saw and heard by perpetually dwelling on the great

drama which they were preparing, and in which all these personages and circumstances were to perform their part and advance their purpose.

At this moment Fakredeen proposed to himself two objects: the first was to bring together the principal chiefs of the mountain, both Maronite and Druse, and virtually to carry into effect at Canobia, that reconciliation between the two races which had been formally effected at Beiroot, in the preceding month of June, by the diplomatic interference of the great powers, and through the signature of certain articles of peace to which we have alluded. His second object was to increase his already considerable influence with these personages, by exhibiting to them, as his guest and familiar friend, an English prince, whose presence could only be accounted for by duties too grave for ordinary envoys, and who was understood to represent, in their fullest sense, the wealth and authority of the richest and most potent of nations.

The credulous air of Syria was favourable to the great mystification in which Lord Montacute was an unconscious agent. It was as fully believed in the mountain, by all the Habeishes and the Eldadahs, the Kazins and the Elvasuds, the Elheires and the Haidars, great Maronite families, as well as by the Druse Djinblats and their rivals the House of Yezbeck, or the House of Talhook, or the House of Abuneked, that the brother of the Queen of England was a guest at Canobia as it was in the stony wilderness of Petræa. Ahmet Raslan the Druse and Butros Kerauney the Maronite, who

agreed upon no other point, were resolved on this. And was it wonderful, for Butros had already received privately two hundred muskets since the arrival of Tancred, and Raslan had been promised in confidence a slice of the impending English loan by Fakredeen?

The extraordinary attention, almost homage, which the Emir paid his guest, entirely authorized these convictions, although they could justify no suspicion on the part of Tancred. The natural simplicity of his manners, indeed, and his constitutional reserve recoiled from the state and ceremony with which he found himself frequently surrounded and too often treated; but Fakredeen peremptorily stopped his remonstrances by assuring him that it was the custom of the country, and that every one present would be offended if a guest of distinction were not entertained with this extreme respect. It is impossible to argue against the customs of a country with which you are not acquainted, but coming home one day from a hawking party, a large assembly of the most influential chieftains, Fakredeen, himself bounding on a Kochlani steed and arrayed in a dress that would have become Solyman the magnificent, Tancred about to dismount, the Lord of Canobia pushed forward, and, springing from his saddle, insisted on holding the stirrup of Lord Montacute.

"I cannot permit this," said Tancred, reddening and keeping his seat.

"If you do not, there is not a man here who will not take *it as a personal* insult," said the Emir, speaking rapidly

between his teeth, yet affecting to smile. "It has been the custom of the Mountain for more than seven hundred years."

"Very strange," thought Tancred, as he complied and dismounted.

All Syria, from Gaza to the Euphrates, is feudal. The system, generally prevalent, flourishes in the mountain region even with intenseness. An attempt to destroy feudalism occasioned the revolt against the Egyptians in 1840, and drove Mehemet Ali from the country which had cost him so much blood and treasure. Every disorder that has subsequently occurred in Syria since the Turkish restoration, may be traced to some officious interposition or hostile encroachment in this respect. The lands of Lebanon are divided into fifteen Mookatas or feudal provinces, and the rights of the mookatadgis, or landlords, in these provinces, are power of punishment not extending to death, service in war, and labour in peace, and the collection of the imperial revenue from the population, who are in fact their vassals, on which they receive a percentage from the Porte. The administration of police, of the revenue, and indeed the whole internal government of Lebanon, are in the hands of the mookatadgis, or rather of the most powerful individuals of this class, who bear the titles of Emirs and Sheikhs, some of whom are proprietors to a very great extent, and many of whom, in point of race and antiquity of established family, are superior to the aristocracy of Europe.

There is no doubt that the founders of this privileged and

territorial class, whatever may be the present creeds of its members, Moslemin, Maronite, or Druse, were the old Arabian conquerors of Syria. The Turks, conquerors in their turn, have succeeded in some degree in the plain to the estates and immunities of the followers of the first caliphs, but the Ottomans never substantially prevailed in the Highlands, and their authority has been recognised mainly by management, and as a convenient compromise amid the rivalries of so many local ambitions.

Always conspicuous among the great families of the Lebanon, during the last century and a half pre-eminent, has been the house of Shehaab; possessing entirely one of the provinces, and widely disseminated and powerfully endowed in several of the others. Since the commencement of the eighteenth century, the virtual sovereignty of the country has been exercised by a prince of this family, under the title of Chief Emir. The chiefs of all the different races have kissed the hand of a Shehaab; he had the power of life and death, could proclaim war and confer honours. Of all this family none were so supreme as the Emir Bescheer, who governed Lebanon during the Egyptian invasion, and to whose subdolous career and its consequences we have already referred. When the Turks triumphed in 1840, the Emir Bescheer was deposed and with his sons sent prisoner to Constantinople. The Porte, warned at that time by the too easy invasion of Syria and the imminent peril which it had escaped, wished itself to *assume the* government of Lebanon and to garrison the passes

with its troops; but the Christian powers would not consent to this proposition, and therefore Kassim Shehaab was called to the Chief Emirate. Acted upon by the patriarch of the Maronites, Kassim, who was a Christian Shehaab, countenanced the attempts of his holiness to destroy the feudal privileges of the Druse mookatadgis, while those of the Maronites were to be retained. This produced the civil war of 1841 in Lebanon, which so perplexed and scandalized England, and which was triumphantly appealed to by France as indubitable evidence of the weakness and unpopularity of the Turks and the fruitlessness of our previous interference. The Turks had as little to do with it as M. Guizot or Lord Palmerston; but so limited is our knowledge upon these subjects that the cry was successful, and many who had warmly supported the English minister during the previous year, and probably in equal ignorance of the real merits of the question, began now to shake their heads and fear that we had perhaps been too precipitate.

The Porte adroitly took advantage of the general anarchy to enforce the expediency of its original proposition, to which the great powers however would not assent. Kassim was deposed, after a reign of a few months, amid burning villages and their slaughtered inhabitants; and, as the Porte was resolved not to try another Shehaab, and the great powers were resolved not to trust the Porte, diplomacy was obliged again to interfere, and undertake to provide Lebanon with a government.

It was the interest of two parties, whose co-operation was highly essential to the settlement of this question, to prevent

the desired adjustment, and these were the Turkish government and the family of Shehaab and their numerous adherents. Anarchy was an argument in the mouth of each, that the Lebanon must be governed by the Porte, or that there never could be tranquillity without a Shehaab prince. The Porte in general contented itself with being passive and watching the fray, while the agents of the great powers planned and promulgated their scheme of polity. The Shehaabs were more active, and their efforts were greatly assisted by the European project which was announced.

The principal feature of this administrative design was the institution of two governors of Lebanon, called Caimacams, one of whom was to be a Maronite and govern the Maronites, and the other a Druse and govern his fellow-countrymen. Superficially, this seemed fair enough, but reduced into practice the machinery would not work. For instance, the populations in many places were blended. Was a Druse Caimacam to govern the Christians in his district? Was the government of the two Caimacams to be sectarian or geographical? Should the Christian Caimacam govern all the Christians, and the Druse Caimacam govern all the Druses of the Lebanon? Or should the Christian Caimacam govern the Christian Mookatas, as well as such Druses as lived mixed with the Christians in the Christian Mookatas, and the Druse Caimacam in the Druse country exercise the same rights?

Hence arose the terms of mixed Druses and mixed Christians; mixed Druses, meaning Druses living in the Christian

country, and mixed Christians those living in the Druse country. Such was the origin of the mixed population question, which entirely upset the project of Downing-street; happy spot where they draw up constitutions for Syria and treaties for China with the same self-complacency and the same success!

Downing-street (1842) decided upon the sectarian government of the Lebanon. It was simple, and probably satisfactory — to Exeter Hall; but Downing-street was quite unaware, or had quite forgotten, that the feudal system prevailed throughout Lebanon. The Christians in the Druse districts were vassals of Druse lords. The direct rule of a Christian Caimacam was an infringement on all the feudal rights of the Djinblats and Yezbecks, of the Talhooks and the Abdel-Maleks. It would be equally fatal to the feudal rights of the Christian chiefs, the Kasins and the Eldadahs, the Elheires and the El Dahers, as regarded their Druse tenantry, unless the impossible plan of the patriarch of the Maronites, which had already produced a civil war, had been adopted. Diplomacy therefore seemed on the point of at length succeeding in uniting the whole population of Lebanon in one harmonious action, but unfortunately against its own project.

The Shehaab party availed themselves of these circumstances with great dexterity and vigour. The party was powerful. The whole of the Maronites, a population of more than 150,000, were enrolled in their ranks. The Emir Bescheer was of their faith; so was the unfortunate Kassim. True,

there were several Shehaab princes who were Moslemin, but they might become Christians, and they were not Druses, at least only two or three of them. The Maronite clergy exercised an unquestioned influence over their flocks. It was powerfully organized: a patriarch, numerous monasteries, nine prelates, and an active country priesthood.

Previously to the civil war of 1841, the feeling of the Druses had been universally in favour of the Shehaabs. The peril in which feudalism was placed revived their ancient sentiments. A Shehaab committee was appointed, with perpetual sittings at Deir El Kamar, the most considerable place in the Lebanon, and, although it was chiefly composed of Christians, there were several Druses at least in correspondence with it. But the most remarkable institution which occurred about this time (1844) was that of "YOUNG SYRIA." It flourishes: in every town and village of Lebanon, there is a band of youth who acknowledge the title, and who profess nationality as their object, though, behind that plea, the restoration of the house of Shehaab generally peeps out.

Downing-street, frightened, gave up sectarian diplomacy, and announced the adoption of the geographical principle of government. The Druses, now that their feudal privileges were secured, cooled in their ardour for nationality. The Shehaabs, on the other hand, finding that the Druses were not to be depended on, changed their note. "Is it to be tolerated for a moment, that a Christian should be governed by a Druse? Were it a Moslem one might bear it — these things

will happen; but a Druse, who adores a golden calf, worshippers of Eblis! — one might as well be governed by a Jew."

The Maronite patriarch sent 200,000 piastres to his children to buy arms; the superior of the convent of Maashmooshi forwarded little less, saying it was much better to spend their treasure in helping the Christians than in keeping it to be plundered by the Druses. Bishop Tubia gave his bond for a round sum, but afterwards recalled it; Bishop Joseph Djezini came into Sidon with his pockets full, and told the people that a prince of the house of Shehaab would soon be at their head, but explained on a subsequent occasion that he went thither merely to distribute charity.

In this state of affairs, in May 1845, the civil war broke out. The Christians attacked the Druses in several districts on the same day. The attack was unprovoked, and eventually unsuccessful. Twenty villages were seen burning at the same time from Beiroot. The Druses repulsed the Christians and punished them sharply: the Turkish troops, at the instigation of the European authorities, marched into the mountain and vigorously interfered. The Maronites did not show as much courage in the field as in the standing committee at Deir el Kamar, but several of the Shehaab princes who headed them, especially the Emir Kais, maintained the reputation of their house and displayed a brilliant courage. The Emir Fakredeen was at Canobia at the time of the outbreak, which, as it often happens, though not unprema-

ditated, was unexpected. He marched to the scene of action at the head of his troops, and, when he found that Kais had been outflanked and repulsed, that the Maronites were disheartened in proportion to their previous vanity and insolence, and that the Turkish forces had interfered, he assumed the character of mediator. Taking advantage of the circumstances and the alarm of all parties at the conjuncture and its yet unascertained consequences, he obtained for the Maronites a long-promised indemnity from the Porte for the ravages of the Druses in the civil war of 1841, which the Druses had been unable to pay, on condition that they should accept the geographical scheme of government; and, having signed, with other Emirs and Sheikhs, the ten articles of peace, he departed, as we have seen, on that visit to Jerusalem, which exercised such control over the career of Lord Montacute, and led to such strange results and such singular adventures.

CHAPTER II.

GALLOPED up the winding steep of Canobia, the Sheikh Said Djinblat, one of the most popular chieftains of the Druses — very amiable and brave, trustworthy and soft-mannered. Four of his cousins rode after him: he came from his castle of Mooktara, which was not distant. He was in the prime of manhood, tall and lithe; enveloped in a bornous which shrouded his dark eye, his white turban, and his gold-embroidered vests; his long lance was couched in its rest, as he galloped up the winding steep of Canobia.

Came slowly, on steeds dark as night, up the winding steep of Canobia, with a company of twenty men on foot, armed with muskets and handjars, the two ferocious brothers Abuneked, Nasif and Hamood. Pale is the cheek of the daughters of Maron at the fell name of Abuneked. The Abunekeds were the Druse lords of the town of Deir el Kamar, where the majority of the inhabitants were Christian. When the patriach tried to deprive the Druses of their feudal rights, the Abunekeds attacked and sacked their own town of Deir el Kamar. The civil war being terminated, and it being agreed, in the settlement of the indemnities from the Druses to the Maronites, that all plunder still in possession of the plunderers should be restored, Nasif Abuneked said, "I have

five hundred silver horns, and each of them I took from the head of a Christian woman. Come and fetch them."

But all this is forgotten now; and least of all should it be remembered by the meek-looking individual who is at this moment about to ascend the winding steep of Canobia. Riding on a mule, clad in a coarse brown woollen dress, in Italy or Spain we should esteem him a simple Capuchin, but in truth he is a prelate, and a prelate of great power; Bishop Nicodemus, to wit, prime councillor of the patriarch, and chief prompter of those measures that occasioned the civil war of 1841. A single sacristan walks behind him — his only retinue, and befitting his limited resources; but the Maronite prelate is recompensed by universal respect; his vanity is perpetually gratified, and, when he appears, Sheikh and peasant are alike proud to kiss the hand which his reverence is ever prompt to extend.

Placed on a more eminent stage, and called upon to control larger circumstances, Bishop Nicodemus might have rivalled the Bishop of Autun; so fertile was he in resource, and so intuitive was his knowledge of men. As it was, he wasted his genius in mountain squabbles, and in regulating the discipline of his little church: suspending priests, interdicting monks, and inflicting public penance on the laity. He rather resembled De Retz than Talleyrand, for he was naturally turbulent and intriguing. He could under no circumstances let well alone. He was a thorough Syrian, at once *subtile and* imaginative. Attached to the house of Shehaab

by policy, he was devoted to Fakredeen as much by sympathy as interest, and had contrived the secret mission of Archbishop Murad to Europe, which had so much perplexed M. Guizot, Lord Cowley, and Lord Aberdeen; and which finally, by the intervention of the same bishop Nicodemus, Fakredeen had disowned.

Came caracoling up the winding steep of Canobia a troop of horsemen, showily attired, and riding steeds that danced in the sunny air. These were the princes Kais and Abdullah Shehaab, and Francis El Kazin, whom the Levantines called Caseno, and the principal members of the Young Syria party; some of them beardless Sheikhs, but all choicely mounted, and each holding on his wrist a falcon; for this was the first day of the year that they might fly. But those who cared not to seek a quarry in the partridge or the gazelle, might find the wild boar or track the panther in the spacious woods of Canobia.

And the Druse chief of the house of Djezbek, who for five hundred years had never yielded precedence to the house of Djinblat, and Sheikh Fahour Kangé, who since the civil war had never smoked a pipe with a Maronite, but who now gave the salaam of peace to the crowds of Habeishs and Dahdahs who passed by; and Butros Keramy, the nephew of the patriarch, himself a great Sheikh, who inhaled his nargilly as he rode, and who looked to the skies and puffed forth his smoke whenever he met a son of Eblis; and the house of Talhook, and the house of Abdel Malek, and a swarm of Elvasuds, and

Elheires, and Eldahers, Emirs and Sheikhs on their bounding steeds, and musketeers on foot, with their light jackets and bare legs and wooden sandals, and black slaves, carrying vases and tubes — everywhere a brilliant and animated multitude, and all mounting the winding steep of Canobia.

The great court of the castle was crowded with men and horses, and fifty mouths at once were drinking at the central basin; the arcades were full of Sheikhs, smoking and squatted on their carpets, which in general they had spread in this locality in preference to the more formal saloons, whose splendid divans rather embarrassed them; though even these chambers were well attended, the guests principally seated on the marble floors covered with their small bright carpets. The domain immediately around the castle was also crowded with human beings. The moment any one arrived, his steed was stabled or picketed; his attendants spread his carpet, sought food for him, which was promptly furnished, with coffee and sherbets and occasionally wine; and when he had sufficiently refreshed himself he lighted his nargilly. Everywhere there was a murmur, but no uproar — a stir, but no tumult. And what was most remarkable amid these spears and sabres, these muskets, handjars, and poniards, was the sweet and perpetually recurring Syrian salutation of "Peace."

Fakredeen, moving about in an immense turban, of the most national and unreformed style, and covered with costly shawls and arms flaming with jewels, recognised and welcomed *every one.* He accosted Druse and Maronite with equal

cordiality, talked much with Said Djinblat, whom he specially wished to gain, and lent one of his choicest steeds to the Djezbek, that he might not be offended. The Talhook and the Abdel Malek could not be jealous of the Habeish and the Eldadah. He kissed the hand of Bishop Nicodemus, but then he sent his own nargilly to the Emir Ahmet Raslan, who was Caimacam of the Druses.

In this strange and splendid scene, Tancred, dressed in a velvet shooting-jacket built in St. James's-street and a wide-awake which had been purchased at Bellamont market, and leaning on a rifle which was the masterpiece of Purday, was not perhaps the least interesting personage. The Emirs and Sheikhs, notwithstanding the powers of dissimulation for which the Orientals are renowned, their habits of self-restraint, and their rooted principle never to seem surprised about anything, have a weakness in respect to arms. After eyeing Tancred for a considerable time with imperturbable countenances, Francis El Kazin sent to Fakredeen to know whether the English prince would favour them by shooting an eagle. This broke the ice, and Fakredeen came, and soon the rifle was in the hands of Francis El Kazin. Sheikh Said Djinblat, who would have died rather than have noticed the rifle in the hands of Tancred, could not resist examining it when in the possession of a brother Sheikh. Kais Shehaab, several Habeishes and Eldadahs, gathered round; exclamations of wonder and admiration arose; sundry asseverations that God was great, followed.

Freeman and Trueman, who were at hand, were summoned to show their lord's double-barrelled gun, and his pistols with hair-triggers. This they did, with that stupid composure and dogged conceit which distinguish English servants in situations which must elicit from all other persons some ebullition of feeling. Exchanging between themselves glances of contempt at the lords of Lebanon, who were ignorant of what everybody knows, they exhibited the arms without the slightest interest or anxiety to make the Sheikhs comprehend them; till Tancred, mortified at their brutality, himself interfered, and, having already no inconsiderable knowledge of the language of the country, though, from his reserve, Fakredeen little suspected the extent of his acquirements, explained felicitously to his companions the process of the arms; and then taking his rifle, and stepping out upon the terrace, he levelled his piece at a heron which was soaring at a distance of upwards of one hundred yards, and brought the bird down amid the applause both of Maronite and Druse.

"He is sent here, I understand," said Butros Keramy, "to ascertain for the Queen of the English whether the country is in favour of the Shehaabs. Could you believe it, but I was told yesterday at Deir el Kamar, that the English consul has persuaded the Queen that even the patriarch was against the Shehaabs?"

"Is it possible?" said Rafael Farah, a Maronite of the house of Eldadah. "It must be the Druses who circulate these enormous falsehoods."

"Hush!" said Young Syria, in the shape of Francis El Kazin, "there is no longer Maronite or Druse: we are all Syrians — we are brothers."

"Then a good many of my brothers are sons of Eblis," said Butros Keramy. "I hope he is not my father."

"Truly, I should like to see the Mountain without the Maronite nation," said Rafael Farah. "That would be a year without rain."

"And mighty things your Maronite nation has done!" rejoined Francis El Kazin. "If there had been the Syrian nation instead of the Maronite nation, and the Druse nation, and half a dozen other nations besides, instead of being conquered by Egypt in 1832, we should have conquered Egypt ourselves long ago and have held it for our farm. We have done mighty things truly with our Maronite nation!"

"To hear an El Kazin speak against the Maronite nation!" exclaimed Rafael Farah, with a look of horror—"a nation that has two hundred convents!"

"And a patriarch," said Butros Keramy, "very much respected even by the Pope of Rome."

"And who were disarmed like sheep," said Francis.

"Not because we were beaten," said Butros, who was brave enough.

"We were persuaded to that," said Rafael.

"By our monks," said Francis — "the convents you are so proud of."

"They were deceived by sons of Eblis," said Butros. "I

never gave up my arms. I have some pieces now, that, although they are not as fine as those of the English prince, could pick a son of Eblis off behind a rock, whether he be Egyptian or Druse."

"Hush!" said Francis El Kazin. "You love our host, Butros; these are not words that will please him —"

"Or me, my children," said Bishop Nicodemus. "This is a great day for Syria! to find the chiefs of both nations assembled at the castle of a Shehaab. Why am I here but to preach peace and love? And Butros Keramy, my friend, my dearly beloved brother Butros — if you wish to please the patriarch, your uncle, who loves you so well, you will no longer call Druses sons of Eblis."

"What are we to call them?" asked Rafael Farah, pettishly.

"Brothers," replied Bishop Nicodemus — "misguided, but still brothers. This is not a moment for brawls, when the great Queen of the English has sent hither her own brother to witness the concord of the Mountain."

Now arose the sound of tabors, beaten without any attempt at a tune, but with unremitting monotony, then the barking of many dogs, more distant. There was a bustle. Many Sheikhs slowly rose; their followers rushed about; some looked at their musket locks, some poised their pikes and spears, some unsheathed their handjars, examined their edge, and then returned them to the sheath. Those who were in the *interior of* the castle came crowding into the great court, which

in turn poured forth its current of population into the table-land about the castle. Here, held by grooms, or picketed, were many steeds. The mares of the Emir Fakredeen were led about by his black slaves. Many of the Sheikhs mounted, prepared for the pastime that awaited them.

There was to be a grand chase in the oak forest, through part of which Tancred had already travelled, and which spread over a portion of the plain and the low hilly country that encompassed it. Three parties, respectively led by the Emir Fakredeen, and the Caimacams of the two nations, were to penetrate into this forest at different and distant points, so that the sport was spread over a surface of many miles. The heads of the great houses of both nations accompanied the Emir of Canobia; their relatives and followers, by the exertions of Francis El Kazin and Young Syria, were in general so distributed, that the Maronites were under the command of the Emir Raslan, the Druse Caimacam, while the Druses followed the Emir Haidar. This great hunting party consisted of more than eight hundred persons, about half of whom were mounted, but all were armed; even those who held the dogs in leash were entitled to join in the sport with the same freedom as the proudest Sheikh. The three leaders having mounted and bowed gracefully to each other, the cavalcades separated, and descended into the plain. The moment they reached the level country, the horsemen shouted and dispersed, galloping in all directions, and many of them throwing their spears; but in a short time they had collected again

under their respective leaders, and the three distinct bodies, each a moving and many-coloured mass, might be observed from the castled heights, each instant diminishing in size and lustre, until they vanished at different points in the distance, and were lost amid the shades of the forest.

For many hours throughout this region nothing was heard but the firing of guns, the barking of dogs, the shouting of men; not a human being was visible, except some groups of women in the villages, with veils suspended on immense silver horns, like our female headgear of the middle ages. By and by, figures were seen stealing forth from the forest, men on foot, one or two, then larger parties; some reposed on the plain, some returned to the villages, some re-ascended the winding steeps of Canobia. The firing, the shouting, the barking had become more occasional. Now a wearied horseman picked his slow way over the plain; then came forth a brighter company, still bounding along. And now they issued, but slowly and in small parties, from various and opposite quarters of the woodland. A great detachment, in a certain order, were then observed to cross the plain and approach the castle. They advanced very gradually, for most of them were on foot, and, joining together, evidently carried burdens; they were preceded and followed by a guard of cavalry. Soon it might be perceived that the produce of the chase was arriving: twenty-five wild boars carried on litters of green branches; innumerable gazelles borne by their victors; trans*fixed by four* spears, and carried by four men, a hyena.

Not very long after this caravan had reached the castle, the firing, which had died away, recommenced; the sounds were near at hand; there was a volley, and almost simultaneously there issued from various parts of the forest, the great body of the hunt. They maintained no order on their return, but dispersed over the plain, blending together, galloping their steeds, throwing their lances, and occasionally firing a shot. Fakredeen and his immediate friends rode up to the Caimacam of the Druses, and they offered each other mutual congratulations on the sport of the morning. They waited for the Caimacam of the Maronites, who, however, did not long detain them; and, when he appeared, their suites joined, and, cantering off at a brisk pace, they soon mounted in company the winding steeps of Canobia.

The kitchen of Canobia was on a great scale, though simple as it was vast. It was formed for the occasion. About fifty square pits, some four feet in length, and about half as deep, had been dug on the table-land in the vicinity of the castle. At each corner of each pit was a stake, and the four supported a rustic gridiron of green wood, suspended over each pit, which was filled with charcoal, and which yielded an equal and continuous heat to the animal reposing on the gridiron: in some instances, a wild boar, in others a sheep — occasionally a couple of gazelles. The sheep had been skinned, for there had been time for the operation; but the game had only been split open, cleared out, and laid on its back, with its feet tied to each of the stakes, so as to retain its position.

While this roasting was going on, they filled the stomachs of the animals with lemons gashed with their daggers, and bruised pomegranates, whose fragrant juice, uniting with the bubbling fat, produced an aromatic and rosy gravy. The huntsmen were the cooks, but the greatest order was preserved; and though the Emirs and the great Sheikhs, heads of houses, retiring again to their divans, occupied themselves with their nargillies, many a mookatadgi mixed with the servants and the slaves; and delighted in preparing this patriarchal banquet, which indeed befitted a castle and a forest. Within the walls they prepared rice, which they piled on brazen and pewter dishes, boiled gallons of coffee, and stewed the liver of the wild boars and the gazelles in the golden wine of Lebanon.

The way they dined was this. Fakredeen had his carpet spread on the marble floor of his principal saloon, and the two Caimacams, Tancred and Bishop Nicodemus, Said Djinblat, the heads of the houses of Djezbek, Talhook and Abdel Malek, Hamood Abuneked, and five Maronite chieftains of equal consideration, the emirs of the house of Shehaab, the Habeish, and the Eldadah, were invited to sit with him. Round the chamber which opened to the air, other chieftains were invited to spread their carpets also; the centre was left clear. The rest of the Sheikhs and mookatadgis established themselves in small parties, grouped in the same fashion, in the great court and under the arcades, taking care to leave

free egress and regress to the fountain. The retainers feasted when all was over in the open air.

Every man found his knife in his girdle, forks were unknown. Fakredeen prided himself on his French porcelain, which the Djinblats, the Talhooks, and the Abunekeds, glanced at very queerly. This European luxury was confined to his own carpet. There was, however, a considerable supply of Egyptian earthenware, and dishes of pewter and brass. The retainers, if they required a plate, found one in the large flat barley cake with which each was supplied. For the principal guests there was no want of coarse goblets of Bohemian glass: delicious water abounded in vases of porous pottery, which might be blended, if necessary, with the red or white wine of the mountain. The rice, which had been dressed with a savoury sauce, was eaten with wooden spoons by those who were supplied with these instruments; but in general the guests served themselves by handfuls.

Ten men brought in a frame work of oaken branches placed transversely, then covered with twigs, and over these, and concealing everything, a bed, fully an inch thick, of mulberry leaves. Upon this fragrant bier reposed a wild boar; and on each side of him reclined a gazelle. Their bodies had closed the moment their feet had been loosened from the stakes, so that the gravy was contained within them. It required a most skilful carver not to waste this precious liquid. The chamber was filled with an invigorating odour as the practised hand of Habas of Deir el Kamar proceeded to the

great performance. His instruments were a silver cup, a poniard, and a handjar. Making a small aperture in the side of the animal, he adroitly introduced the cup, and proportionately baled out the gravy to a group of plates that were extended to him; then, plunging in the long poniard on which he rested, he made an incision with the keen edge and broad blade of the handjar, and sent forth slice after slice of white fat and ruby flesh.

The same ceremony was performing in the other parts of the castle. Ten of the pits had been cleared of their burden to appease the first cravings of the appetite of the hunters. The fires had been replenished, the gridirons again covered, and such a supply kept up as should not only satisfy the chieftains, but content their followers. Tancred could not refrain from contrasting the silent, businesslike way in which the Shehaabs, the Talhooks, the Djinblats, and the Habeish, performed the great operation that was going on, with the conversation which is considered an indispensable accompaniment of a dinner in Franguestan; for we must no longer presume to call Europe by its beautiful oriental name of Christendom. The Shehaabs, the Talhooks, the Djinblats, and the Habeish, were sensible men, who were of opinion, that if you want to talk you should not by any means eat, since from such an attempt at a united performance it generally results, that you neither converse nor refresh yourself in a satisfactory manner.

There can be no question that, next to the corroding cares

of Europeans, principally occasioned by their love of accumulating money which they never enjoy, the principal cause of the modern disorder of dyspepsia prevalent among them, is their irrational habit of interfering with the process of digestion by torturing attempts at repartee, and racking their brain, at a moment when it should be calm, to remind themselves of some anecdote so appropriate that they have forgotten it. It has been supposed that the presence of women at our banquets has occasioned this fatal and inopportune desire to shine; and an argument has been founded on this circumstance in favour of their exclusion from an incident which, on the whole, has a tendency to impair that ideal which they should always study and cherish. It may be urged that if a woman eats she may destroy her spell, and that, if she will not eat, she destroys our dinner.

Notwithstanding all this, and without giving any opinion on this latter point, it should be remembered, that at dinners strictly male, where there is really no excuse for anything of the kind, where, if you are a person of ascertained position, you are invited for that position and for nothing else, and where, if you are not a person of ascertained position, the more agreeable you make yourself, the more you will be hated, and the less chance you will have of being asked there again or anywhere else, still this fatal frenzy prevails; and individuals are found who, from soup to coffee, from egg to apple, will tell anecdotes, indulge in jests or in a tone of levity approaching to jesting, pour forth garrulous secret

history with which every one is acquainted, and never say a single thing which is new that is not coolly invented for the occasion.

The princes of the house of Shehaab, Kais, and Assaad, and Abdullah, the Habeish and the Eldadah, the great houses of the Druses, the Djinblat and the Yezbek, the Abuneked, the Talhook, and the Abdel Malek, were not of this school. Silently, determinedly, unceasing, unsatiated, they proceeded with the great enterprise on which they had embarked. If the two nations were indeed to be united, and form a great whole under the sceptre of a Shehaab, let not this banquet pass like the hypocritical hospitality of ordinary life, where men offer what they desire not to be accepted by those who have no wish to receive. This, on the contrary, was a real repast — a thing to be remembered. Practice made the guests accustomed to the porcelain of Paris and the goblets of Prague. Many was the goodly slice of wild boar succeeded by the rich flesh of the gazelle, of which they disposed. There were also wood-pigeons, partridges, which the falconers had brought down, and quails from the wilderness. At length, they called again for rice, a custom which intimated that their appetite for meat was satisfied, and immediately Nubian slaves covered them with towels of fine linen fringed with gold, and while they held their hands over the basin poured sweet waters from the ewer.

In the mean time, Butros Keramy opened his heart to *Rafael* Farah.

"I begin," said Butros, quaffing a cup of the Vino d'Oro, "to believe in nationality."

"It cannot be denied," said Rafael Farah, judiciously shaking his head, "that the two nations were once under the same prince. If the great powers would agree to a Shehaab, and we could sometimes meet together in the present fashion, there is no saying — prejudices might wear off."

"Shall it ever be said that I am of the same nation as Hamood Abuneked!" said Butros.

"Ah! it is very dreadful," said Rafael — "a man who has burned convents!"

"And who has five hundred Maronite horns in his castle," said Butros.

"But suppose he restores them?" said Francis El Kazin.

"That would make a difference," said Rafael Farah.

"There can be no difference while he lives," said Butros.

"I fear 't is an affair of blood," said Rafael Farah.

"Taking horns was never an affair of blood," said Francis El Kazin.

"What should be an affair of blood," said Butros, "if —"

"But nothing else but taking horns can be proved," said Francis El Kazin.

"There is a good deal in that!" said Rafael Farah.

After confectionary which had been prepared by nuns, and strong waters which had been distilled by the hands of priors, the chieftains praised God, and rose, and took their

seats on the divan, when immediately advanced a crowd of slaves, each bearing a nargilly, which they presented to the guests. Then gradually the conversation commenced. It was entirely confined to the exploits of the day, which had been rich in the heroic feats of forest huntsmen. There had been wild boars too as brave as their destroyers; some slight wounds, some narrow escapes. Sheikh Said Djinblat inquired of Lord Montacute whether there were hyenas in England, but was immediately answered by the lively and well-informed Kais Shehaab, who apprised him that there were only lions and unicorns. Bishop Nicodemus, who watched the current of observations, began telling hunting stories of the time of the Emir Bescheer, when that prince resided at his splendid castle of Bteddeen, near Deir el Kamar. This was to recall the days when the Mountain had only one ruler, and that ruler a Shehaab, and when the Druse lords were proud to be classed among his most faithful subjects.

In the mean time smoking had commenced throughout the castle, but this did not prevent the smokers from drinking raki as well as the sober juice of Mocha. Four hundred men, armed with nargilly or chibouque, inhaling and puffing with that ardour and enjoyment which men, after a hard day's hunting and a repast of unusual solidity, can alone experience! Without the walls, almost as many individuals were feasting in the open air; brandishing their handjars as they cut up the huge masses of meat before them, plunging their eager hands *into the enormous* dishes of rice, and slaking their thirst by

emptying at a draught a vase of water, which they poured aloft as the Italians would a flask of wine or oil.

"And the most curious thing," said Freeman to Trueman, as they established themselves under a pine tree, with an ample portion of roast meat, and armed with their travelling knives and forks — "and the most curious thing is, that they say these people are Christians! Who ever heard of Christians wearing turbans?"

"Or eating without knives and forks?" added Trueman.

"It would astonish their weak minds in the steward's room at Bellamont, if they could see all this, John," said Mr. Freeman, pensively. "A man who travels has very great advantages."

"And very great hardships too," said Trueman. "I don't care for work, but I do like to have my meals regular."

"This is not bad picking though," said Mr. Freeman; "they call it gazelle, which I suppose is the foreign for venison."

"If you called this venison at Bellamont," said Trueman, "they would look very queer in the steward's room."

"Bellamont is Bellamont, and this place is this place, John," said Mr. Freeman. "The Hameer is a noble gentleman, every inch of him, and I am very glad my lord has got a companion of his own kidney. It is much better than monks and hermits, and low people of that sort, who are not by no means fit company for somebody I could mention, and might turn him into a papist into the bargain."

"That would be a bad business," said Trueman; "my lady could never abide that. It would be better that he should turn Turk."

"I am not sure it wouldn't," said Mr. Freeman. "It would be in a manner more constitutional. The Sultan of Turkey may send an Ambassador to our Queen but the Pope of Rome may not."

"I should not like to turn Turk," said Trueman, very thoughtfully.

"I know what you are thinking of John," said Mr. Freeman, in a serious tone. "You are thinking if anything were to happen to either of us in this heathen land, where we should get Christian burial."

"Lord love you, Mr. Freeman, no I wasn't. I was thinking of a glass of ale."

"Ah!" sighed Freeman, "it softens the heart to think of such things away from home, as we are. Do you know, John, there are times when I feel very queer — there are indeed. I catched myself a singing 'Sweet Home' one night, among those savages in the wilderness. One wants consolation, John, sometimes — one does, indeed; and, for my part, I do miss the family prayers and the home-brewed."

As the twilight died away, they lighted immense bonfires, as well to cheer them during their bivouac, as to deter any adventurous panther, stimulated by the savoury odours, or *hyena, breathing* fraternal revenge, from reconnoitring their

encampment. By degrees, however, the noise of the revellers without subsided, and at length died away. Having satisfied their hunger, and smoked their chibouques, often made from the branch which they had cut since their return from hunting, with the bud still alive upon the fresh green tube, they wrapped themselves in their cloaks and sheepskins and sunk into a deep and well-earned repose.

Within, the Sheikhs and mookatadgis gradually, by no means simultaneously, followed their example. Some, taking off their turbans and loosening their girdles, ensconced themselves under the arcades, lying on their carpets and covered with their pelisses and cloaks; some strolled into the divaned chambers, which were open to all, and more comfortably stowed themselves upon the well-stuffed cushions; others, overcome with fatigue and their revel, were lying in deep sleep, outstretched in the open court, and picturesque in the blazing moonlight.

The hunting party was to last three days, and few intended to leave Canobia on the morrow; but it must not be supposed that the guests experienced any very unusual hardships in what the reader may consider a far from satisfactory mode of passing their night. To say nothing of the warm and benignant climate, the Easterns have not the custom of retiring or rising with the formality of the occidental nations. They take their sleep when they require it, and meet its embrace without preparation. One cause of this difference undoubtedly is, that

the Orientals do not connect the business of the toilette with that of rest. The daily bath, with its elaborate processes, is the spot where the mind ponders on the colour of a robe or the fashion of a turban — the daily bath, which is the principal incident of oriental habits, and which can scarcely be said to exist among our own.

Fakredeen had yielded even his own chambers to his friends. Every divan in Canobia was open, excepting the rooms of Tancred. These were sacred, and the Emir had requested his friend to receive him as a guest during the festival, and apportion him one of his chambers. The head of the house of Talhook was asleep with the tube of his nargilly in his mouth; the Yezbek had unwound his turban, cast off his sandals, wrapped himself in his pelisses, and fairly turned in. Bishop Nicodemus was kneeling in a corner, and kissing a silver cross, and Hamood Abuneked had rolled himself up in a carpet, and was snoring as if he were blowing through one of the horns of the Maronites. Fakredeen shot a glance at Tancred, instantly recognised. Then, rising and giving the salaam of peace to his guests, the Emir and his English friend made their escape down a corridor, at the bottom of which was one of the few doors that could be found in the castle of Canobia. Baroni received them, on the watch lest some cruising Sheikh should appropriate their resting place. The young moon, almost as young and bright as it was two months before at Gaza, suffused with lustre the beautiful garden of fruits and flowers

without. Under the balcony, Baroni had placed a divan with many cushions, a lamp with burning coffee, and some fresh nargillies.

"Thank God, we are alone!" exclaimed Fakredeen. "Tell me, my Tancred, what do you think of it all?"

CHAPTER III.

"It has been a great day," said Tancred — "not to be forgotten."

"Yes; but what do you think of them? Are they the fellows I described — the men that might conquer the world?"

"To conquer the world depends on men not only being good soldiers, but being animated by some sovereign principle that nothing can resist," replied Tancred.

"But that we have got," rejoined Fakredeen.

"But have they got it?"

"We can give it to them."

"I am not so sure of that. It seems to me that we are going to establish a theocratic equality by the aid of the feudal system."

"That is to say, their present system," replied Fakredeen. "Islamism was propagated by men who were previously idolaters, and our principle may be established by those whose practice at the present time is directly opposed to it."

"I still cling to my first idea of making the movement from the desert:" said Tancred, "the Arabians are entirely unsophisticated; they are now as they were in the time of *Mahomet,* of Moses, of Abraham: a sublime devotion is

natural to them, and equality, properly developed, is in fact the patriarchal principle."

"But these are Arabians," said Fakredeen, "I am an Arabian; there is not a mookatadgi, whatever his present creed, who does not come from Yemen, or the Hedjaz, or the Nejid."

"That is a great qualification," said Tancred, musingly.

"And, see what men these are!" continued Fakredeen, with great animation. "Lebanon can send forth more than fifty thousand well-armed, and yet let enough stay at home to guard the mulberry trees and the women. Then you can keep them for nothing; a Bedoueen is not more temperate than a Druse, if he pleases: he will get through a campaign on olives and cheese; they do not require even tents; they bivouac in a sheepskin."

"And yet," said Tancred, "though they have maintained themselves, they have done nothing; now the Arabs have always succeeded."

"I will tell you how that is," said Fakredeen. "It is very true that we have not done much, and that, when we descended into the plain, as we did in '63, under the Emir Yousef, we were beat — beaten back even by the Mutualis — it is that we have no cavalry. They have always contrived to enlist the great tribes of the Syrian desert against us, as, for instance, under Daher, of whom you must have heard: it was that which has prevented our development, but we

have always maintained ourselves. Lebanon is the key of Syria, and the country was never unlocked, unless we pleased. But this difficulty is now removed. Through Amalek we shall have the desert on our side; he is omnipotent in the Syrian wilderness, and if he sends messengers through Petræa to Derayeh, the Nejid, and through the Hedjaz, to Yemen and Oman, we could easily get a cavalry as efficient and not less numerous than our foot."

"The instruments will be found," said Tancred, "for it is decreed that the deed should be done. But the favour of Providence does not exempt man from the exercise of human prudence. On the contrary, it is an agent, on whose co-operation they are bound to count. I should like to see something of the great Syrian cities; I should like also to see Bagdad. It appears to me, at the first glance, that the whole country to the Euphrates might be conquered in a campaign; but then I want to know how far artillery is necessary — whether it be indispensable. Then again, the Lesser Asia — we should never lose sight of the Lesser Asia as the principal scene of our movements; the richest regions in the world, almost depopulated, and a position from which we might magnetize Europe. But suppose the Turks, through Lesser Asia, conquer Lebanon, while we are overrunning the Babylonian and Assyrian monarchies? That will never do. I see your strength here with your own people and the Druses, and I do not underrate their qualities: but who is to garrison *the north of* Syria? Who is to keep the passes of the north?

What population have you to depend on between Tripoli and Antioch, or between Aleppo and Adanah? Of all this I know nothing."

Fakredeen had entirely imbibed the views of Tancred; he was sincere in his professions, fervent in his faith. A great feudal proprietor, he was prepared to forsake his beautiful castle, his farms and villages, his vineyards, and mulberry orchards, and forests of oaks, to assist in establishing, by his voice and his sabre, a new social system, which was to substitute the principle of association for that of dependence as the foundation of the Commonwealth, under the sanction and superintendence of the God of Sinai and of Calvary. True it was, that the young Syrian Emir intended, that among the consequences of the impending movement should be his enthronement on one of the royal seats of Asia. But we should do him injustice, were we to convey the impression that his ardent co-operation with Tancred at this moment was impelled merely, or even principally, by these coarsely selfish considerations. Men certainly must be governed, whatever the principle of the social system, and Fakredeen felt born with a predisposition to rule.

But greater even than his desire for empire was his thirst for action. He was wearied with the glittering cage in which he had been born. He panted for a wider field and a nobler theatre, interests more vast and incidents more dazzling and comprehensive; he wished to astonish Europe instead of Lebanon, and to use his genius in baffling and controlling the

thrones and dominations of the world, instead of managing the simple Sheikhs and Emirs of his mountains. His castle and fine estates were no sources of satisfaction to him. On the contrary, he viewed Canobia with disgust. It entailed duties, and brought no excitement. He was seldom at home and only for a few passing days: continued residence was intolerable to his restless spirit. He passed his life in perpetual movement, scudding about on the fleetest dromedaries, and galloping over the deserts on steeds of the highest race.

Though proud of his ancient house, and not unequal, when necessary, to the due representation of his position, unlike the orientals in general, he disliked pomp, and shrank from the ceremony which awaited him. His restless, intriguing, and imaginative spirit revelled in the incognito. He was perpetually in masquerade; a merchant, a Mamlouk, a soldier of fortune, a Tartar messenger, sometimes a pilgrim, sometimes a Dervish, always in pursuit of some improbable but ingenious object, or lost in the mazes of some fantastic plot. He enjoyed moving alone, without a single attendant, and seldom in his mountains, he was perpetually in Egypt, Bagdad, Cyprus, Smyrna, and the Syrian cities. He sauntered away a good deal of his time indeed in the ports and towns of the coast, looking after his creditors, but this was not the annoyance to him which it would be to most men.

Fakredeen was fond of his debts; they were the source in*deed of his only* real excitement, and he was grateful to them

for their stirring powers. The usurers of Syria are as adroit and callous as those of all other countries, and possess no doubt all those repulsive qualities which are the consequence of an habitual control over every generous emotion. But, instead of viewing them with feelings of vengeance or abhorrence, Fakredeen studied them unceasingly with a fine and profound investigation, and found in their society a deep psychological interest. His own rapacious soul delighted to struggle with their rapine, and it charmed him to baffle with his artifice their fraudulent dexterity. He loved to enter their houses with his glittering eye and face radiant with innocence, and, when things were at the very worst and they remorseless, to succeed in circumventing them. In a certain sense, and to a certain degree, they were all his victims. True, they had gorged upon his rents and menaced his domains, but they had also advanced large sums, and he had so involved one with another in their eager appetite to prey upon his youth, and had so complicated the financial relations of the Syrian coast in his own respect, that sometimes they tremblingly calculated that the crash of Fakredeen must inevitably be the signal of a general catastrophe.

Even usurers have their weak side; some are vain, some envious; Fakredeen knew how to titillate their self-love, or when to give them the opportunity of immolating a rival. Then it was, when he had baffled and deluded them, or with that fatal frankness, of which he sometimes blushingly boasted, had betrayed some sacred confidence that shook the credit of

the whole coast from Scanderoon to Gaza, and embroiled individuals whose existence depended on their mutual good-will, that, laughing like one of the blue-eyed hyenas of his forests, he galloped away to Canobia, and, calling for his nargilly, mused in chuckling calculation over the prodigious sums he owed to them, formed whimsical and airy projects for his quittance, or delighted himself by brooding over the memory of some happy expedient or some daring feat of finance.

"What should I be without my debts?" he would sometimes exclaim; "dear companions of my life that never desert me! All my knowledge of human nature is owing to them: it is in managing my affairs that I have sounded the depths of the human heart, recognised all the combinations of human character, developed my own powers, and mastered the resources of others. What expedient in negotiation is unknown to me? What degree of endurance have I not calculated? What play of the countenance have I not observed? Yes, among my creditors, I have disciplined that diplomatic ability, that shall some day confound and control cabinets. O! my debts, I feel your presence like that of guardian angels! If I be lazy, you prick me to action; if elate, you subdue me to reflection; and thus it is that you alone can secure that continuous yet controlled energy, which conquers mankind."

Notwithstanding all this, Fakredeen had grown sometimes a little wearied even of the choice excitement of pecuniary em*barrassment.* It was too often the same story — the adventures

monotonous, the characters identical. He had been plundered by every usurer in the Levant, and in turn had taken them in. He sometimes delighted his imagination by the idea of making them disgorge — that is to say, when he had established that supremacy which he had resolved sooner or later to attain. Although he never kept an account, his memory was so faithful that he knew exactly the amount of which he had been defrauded by every individual with whom he had had transactions. He longed to mulct them, to the service of the State, in the exact amount of their unhallowed appropriations. He was too good a statesman ever to confiscate; he confined himself to taxation. Confiscation is a blunder that destroys public credit; taxation, on the contrary, improves it; and both come to the same thing.

That the proud soul of Tancred of Montacute, with its sublime aspirations, its inexorable purpose, its empyrean ambition, should find a votary in one apparently so whimsical, so worldly, and so worthless, may at the first glance seem improbable; yet a nearer and finer examination may induce us to recognise its likelihood. Fakredeen had a brilliant imagination and a passionate sensibility; his heart was controlled by his taste, and, when that was pleased and satisfied, he was capable of profound feeling and of earnest conduct. Moral worth had no abstract charms for him, and he could sympathize with a dazzling reprobate; but virtue in an heroic form, lofty principle, and sovereign duty, invested with all the attributes calculated to captivate his rapid and refined perception,

exercised over him a resistless and transcendent spell. The deep and disciplined intelligence of Tancred, trained in all the philosophy and cultured with all the knowledge of the West, acted with magnetic power upon a consciousness, the bright vivacity of which was only equalled by its virgin ignorance of all that books can teach, and of those great conclusions which the studious hour can alone elaborate. Fakredeen hung upon his accents like a bee, while Tancred poured forth, without an effort, the treasures of his stored memory and long musing mind. He went on, quite unconscious that his companion was devoid of that previous knowledge, which, with all other persons, would have been a preliminary qualification for a profitable comprehension of what he said. Fakredeen gave him no hint of this: the young Emir trusted to his quick perception to sustain him, although his literary training was confined to an Arabic grammar, some sentences of wise men, some volumes of poetry, and mainly and most profitably to the clever Courier de Smyrne, and occasionally a packet of French journals which he obtained from a Levantine consul.

It was therefore with a feeling not less than enthusiastic that Fakredeen responded to the suggestive influence of Tancred. The want that he had long suffered from was supplied, and the character he had long mused over had appeared. Here was a vast theory to be reduced to practice, and a commanding mind to give the leading impulse. However imperfect may have been his general conception of the ideas of Tancred, he *clearly comprehended* that their fulfilment involved his two

great objects — change and action. Compared with these attainments on a great scale, his present acquisition and position sank into nothingness. A futurity consisting of a Syrian Emirate and a mountain castle figured as intolerable, and Fakredeen, hoping all things and prepared for anything, flung to the winds all consideration for his existing ties, whether in the shape of domains or of debts.

The imperturbable repose, the grave and thoughtful daring, with which Tancred developed his revolutionary projects, completed the power with which he could now dispose of the fate of the young Emir. Sometimes, in fluttering moments of disordered reverie, Fakredeen had indulged in dreams of what, with his present companion, it appeared was to be the ordinary business of their lives, and which he discussed with a calm precision which alone half convinced Fakredeen of their feasibility. It was not for an impassioned votary to intimate a difficulty; but, if Fakredeen, to elicit an opinion, sometimes hinted an adverse suggestion, the objection was swept away in an instant by an individual whose inflexible will was sustained by the conviction of divine favour.

CHAPTER IV.

"Do you know anything of a people in the north of this country, called the Ansarey?" inquired Tancred of Baroni.

"No, my lord; and no one else. They hold the mountainous country about Antioch, and will let no one enter it; a very warlike race; they beat back the Egyptians; but Ibrahim Pacha loaded his artillery with piastres the second time he attacked them, and they worked very well with the Pacha after that."

"Are they Moslemin?"

"It is very easy to say what they are not, and that is about the extent of any knowledge that we have of them; they are not Moslemin, they are not Christians, they are not Druses, and they are not Jews, and certainly they are not Guebres, for I have spoken of them to the Indians at Djedda, who are fire-worshippers, and they do not in any degree acknowledge them."

"And what is their race? Are they Arabs?"

"I should say not, my lord; for the only one I ever saw was more like a Greek or an Armenian than a son of the desert."

"You have seen one of them?"

"It was at Damascus: there was a city brawl, and M. de *Sidonia saved the life* of a man, who turned out to be an An-

sarey, though disguised. They have secret agents at most of the Syrian cities. They speak Arabic; but I have heard M. de Sidonia say they have also a language of their own."

"I wonder he did not visit them."

"The plague raged at Aleppo when we were there, and the Ansarey were doubly rigid in their exclusion of all strangers from their country."

"And this Ansarey at Damascus, have you ever seen anything of him since?"

"Yes; I have been at Damascus several times since I travelled with M. de Sidonia, and I have sometimes smoked a nargilly with this man — his name is Darkush, and he deals in drugs."

Now this was the reason that induced Tancred to inquire of Baroni respecting the Ansarey. The day before, which was the third day of the great hunting party at Canobia, Fakredeen and Tancred had found themselves alone with Hamood Abuneked, and the lord of Canobia had thought it a good occasion to sound this powerful Sheikh of the Druses. Hamood was rough, but frank and sincere. He was no enemy of the house of Shehaab; but the Abunekeds had suffered during the wars and civil conflicts which had of late years prevailed in Lebanon, and he was evidently disinclined to mix in any movement which was not well matured and highly promising of success. Fakredeen, of course, concealed his ulterior purpose from the Druse, who associated with the idea of union between the two nations merely the institution of a sole government.

under one head, and that head a Shehaab—probably dwelling at Canobia.

"I have fought by the side of the Emir Bescheer," said Hamood, "and would he were in his palace of Bteddeen at this moment! And the Abunekeds rode with the Emir Yousef against Djezzar. It is not the house of Abuneked that would say there should be two weak nations when there might be one strong one. But what I say is sealed with the signet of truth; it is known to the old, and it is remembered by the wise; the Emir Bescheer has said it to me as many times as there are oranges on that tree, and the Emir Yousef has said it to my father. The northern passes are not guarded by Maronite or by Druse."

"And as long as they are not guarded by us?" said Fakreddeen, inquiringly.

"We may have a sole prince and a single government," continued Hamood, "and the houses of the two nations may be brothers, but every now and then the Osmanli will enter the Mountain, and we shall eat sand."

"And who holds the northern passes, noble Sheikh?" inquired Tancred.

"Truly, I believe," replied Hamood, "very sons of Eblis, for the whole of that country is in the hands of the Ansarey, and there never has been evil in the Mountain that they have not been against us."

"They never would draw with the Shehaabs," said Fakreddeen; "*and I* have heard the Emir Bescheer say that, if the

Ansarey had acted with him, he would have baffled, in '40, both the Porte and the Pacha."

"It was the same in the time of the Emir Yousef," said Sheikh Hamood. "They can bring twenty-five thousand picked men into the plain."

"And, I suppose, if it were necessary, would not be afraid to meet the Osmanli in Anatoly?" said Fakredeen.

"If the Turkmans or the Kurds would join them," said Sheikh Hamood, "there is nothing to prevent them washing their horses' feet in the Bosphorus."

"It is very strange," said Fakredeen, "but frequently as I have been at Aleppo and Antioch, I have never been in their country. I have always been warned against it, always kept from it, which indeed ought to have prompted my earliest efforts, when I was my own master, to make them a visit. But, I know not how it is, there are some prejudices that do stick to one. I have a prejudice against the Ansarey — a sort of fear, a kind of horror. 'T is vastly absurd. I suppose my nurse instilled it into me, and frightened me with them when I would not sleep. Besides, I had an idea that they particularly hated the Shehaabs. I recollect so well the Emir Bescheer, at Bteddeen, bestowing endless imprecations on them."

"He made many efforts to win them, though," said Sheikh Hamood, "and so did the Emir Yousef."

"And you think without them, noble Sheikh," said Tancred, "that Syria is not secure?"

"I think, with them and peace with the desert, that Syria might defy Turk and Egyptian."

"And carry the war into the enemy's quarters, if necessary?" said Fakredeen.

"If they would let us alone, I am content to leave them," said Hamood.

"Hem!" said the Emir Fakredeen. "Do you see that gazelle, noble Sheikh! How she bounds along! What if we follow her, and the pursuit should lead us into the lands of the Ansarey?"

"It would be a long ride," said Sheikh Hamood. "Nor should I care much to trust my head in a country governed by a woman."

"A woman!" exclaimed Tancred and Fakredeen.

"They say as much," said Sheikh Hamood; "perhaps it is only a coffee-house tale."

"I never heard it before," said Fakredeen. "In the time of my uncle, Elderidis was Sheikh. I have heard indeed that the Ansarey worship a woman."

"Then they would be Christians," said Sheikh Hamood, "and I never heard that."

CHAPTER V.

It was destined that Napoleon should never enter Rome, and Mahomet never enter Damascus. What was the reason of this? They were not uninterested in those cities that interest all. The Emperor selected from the capital of the Cæsars the title of his son; the Prophet, when he beheld the crown of Syria, exclaimed that it was too delightful, and that he must reserve his paradise for another world. Buonaparte was an Italian, and must have often yearned after the days of Rome triumphant. The son of Abdallah was descended from the patriarchs, whose progenitor had been moulded out of the red clay of the most ancient city in the world. Absorbed by the passionate pursuit of the hour, the two heroes postponed a gratification which they knew how to appreciate, but which, with all their success, all their power, and all their fame, they were never permitted to indulge. What moral is to be drawn from this circumstance? That we should never lose an occasion. Opportunity is more powerful even than conquerors and prophets.

The most ancient city of the world has no antiquity. This flourishing abode is older than many ruins, yet it does not possess one single memorial of the past. In vain has it conquered or been conquered. Not a trophy, a column or an arch, records its warlike fortunes. Temples have been raised

here to unknown gods and to revealed Divinity; all have been swept away. Not the trace of a palace or a prison, a public bath, a hall of justice, can be discovered in this wonderful city, where everything has been destroyed, and where nothing has decayed.

Men moralize among ruins, or, in the throng and tumult of successful cities, recall past visions of urban desolation for prophetic warning. London is a modern Babylon; Paris has aped imperial Rome, and may share its catastrophe. But what do the sages say to Damascus? It had municipal rights in the days when God conversed with Abraham. Since then, the kings of the great monarchies have swept over it; and the Greek and the Roman, the Tatar, the Arab, and the Turk, have passed through its walls; yet it still exists and still flourishes; is full of life, wealth, and enjoyment. Here is a city that has quaffed the magical elixir and secured the philosopher's stone, that is always young and always rich. As yet, the disciples of progress have not been able exactly to match this instance of Damascus, but, it is said that they have great faith in the future of Birkenhead.

We moralize among ruins: it is always when the game is played, that we discover the cause of the result. It is a fashion intensely European, the habit of an organization that, having little imagination, takes refuge in reason, and carefully locks the door when the steed is stolen. A community has crumbled to pieces, and it is always accounted for by its political forms or its religious modes. There has been a deficiency in what

is called checks in the machinery of government; the definition of the suffrage has not been correct; what is styled responsibility has, by some means or other, not answered; or, on the other hand, people have believed too much or too little in a future state, have been too much engrossed by the present, or too much absorbed in that which was to come. But there is not a form of government which Damascus has not experienced, excepting the representative, and not a creed which it has not acknowledged, excepting the Protestant. Yet, deprived of the only rule and the only religion that are right, it is still justly described by the Arabian poets as a pearl surrounded by emeralds.

Yes, the rivers of Damascus still run and revel within and without the walls, of which the steward of Sheikh Abraham was a citizen. They have encompassed them with gardens, and filled them with fountains. They gleam amid their groves of fruit, wind through their vivid meads, sparkle among perpetual flowers, gush from the walls, bubble in the courtyards, dance and carol in the streets: everywhere their joyous voices, everywhere their glancing forms, filling the whole world around with freshness, and brilliancy, and fragrance, and life. One might fancy, as we track them in their dazzling course, or suddenly making their appearance in every spot and in every scene, that they were the guardian spirits of the city. You have explained then, says the utilitarian, the age and flourishing fortunes of Damascus: they arise from its advantageous situation; it is well supplied with water. Is it better sup-

plied than the ruins of contiguous regions? Did the Nile save Thebes? Did the Tigris preserve Nineveh? Did the Euphrates secure Babylon?

Our scene lies in a chamber vast and gorgeous. The reader must imagine a hall, its form that of a rather long square, but perfectly proportioned. Its coved roof, glowing with golden and scarlet tints, is highly carved in the manner of the Saracens, such as we may observe in the palaces of Moorish Spain and in the Necropolis of the Mamlouk Sultauns at Cairo, deep recesses of honeycomb work, with every now and then pendents of daring grace hanging like stalactites from some sparry cavern. This roof is supported by columns of white marble, fashioned in the shape of palm trees, the work of Italian artists, and which form arcades around the chamber. Beneath these arcades runs a noble divan of green and silver silk, and the silken panels of the arabesque walls have been covered with subjects of human interest by the finest artists of Munich. The marble floor, with its rich mosaics, was also the contribution of Italian genius, though it was difficult, at the present moment, to trace its varied, graceful, and brilliant designs, so many were the sumptuous carpets, the couches, sofas, and cushions that were spread about it. There were indeed throughout the chamber many indications of furniture, which are far from usual even among the wealthiest and most refined Orientals: Indian tables, vases of china, and baskets of agate and porcelain filled with flowers. From one side, the large Saracenic windows of

this saloon, which were not glazed, but covered only when required by curtains of green and silver silk, now drawn aside, looked on a garden; vistas of quivering trees, broad parterres of flowers, and everywhere the gleam of glittering fountains, which owned, however, fealty to the superior stream, that bubbled in the centre of the saloon, where four negroes, carved in black marble, poured forth its refreshing waters from huge shells of pearl, into the vast circle of a jasper basin.

At this moment the chamber was enlivened by the presence of many individuals. Most of these were guests; one was the master of the columns and the fountains; a man much above the middle height, though as well proportioned as his sumptuous hall; admirably handsome, for beauty and benevolence blended in the majestic countenance of Adam Besso. To-day his Syrian robes were not unworthy of his palace; the cream-white shawl that encircled his brow with its ample folds was so fine that the merchant who brought it to him carried it over the ocean and the desert in the hollow shell of a pomegranate. In his girdle rested a handjar the sheath of which was of a rare and vivid enamel, and the hilt entirely of brilliants.

A slender man of middle size, who, as he stood by Besso, had a diminutive appearance, was in earnest conversation with his host. This personage was adorned with more than one order, and dressed in the Frank uniform of one of the great powers, though his head was shaven, for he wore a

tarboush or red cap, although no turban. This gentleman was Signor Elias de Laurella, a wealthy Hebrew merchant at Damascus, and Austrian consul-general *ad honorem;* a great man, almost as celebrated for his diplomatic as for his mercantile abilities; a gentleman who understood the Eastern question; looked up to for that, but still more, in that he was the father of the two prettiest girls in the Levant.

The Mademoiselles de Laurella, Therèse and Sophonisbe, had just completed their education, partly at Smyrna, the last year at Marseilles. This had quite turned their heads; they had come back with a contempt for Syria, the bitterness of which was only veiled by the high style of European nonchalance, of which they had a supreme command, and which is perhaps our only match for Eastern repose. The Mademoiselles de Laurella were highly accomplished, could sing quite ravishingly, paint fruits and flowers, and drop to each other, before surrounding savages, mysterious allusions to feats in ball-rooms, which, alas! no longer could be achieved. They signified, and in some degree solaced, their intense disgust at their present position by a haughty and amusingly impassible demeanour, which meant to convey their superiority to all surrounding circumstances. One of their favourite modes of asserting this pre-eminence was wearing the Frank dress, which their father only did officially, and which no female member of their family had ever assumed, though Damascus swarmed with Laurellas. Nothing in the dreams *of Madame Carson,* or Madame Camille, or Madame Devy,

nothing in the blazoned pages of the Almanachs des Dames and Belle Assemblée, ever approached the Mdlles. Laurella, on a day of festival. It was the acme. Nothing could be conceived beyond it; nobody could equal it. It was taste exaggerated, if that be possible; fashion baffling pursuit, if that be permitted. It was a union of the highest moral and material qualities; the most sublime contempt and the stiffest cambric. Figure to yourself, in such habiliments, two girls, of the same features, the same form, the same size, but of different colour: a nose turned up, but choicely moulded, large eyes and richly fringed, fine hair, beautiful lips and teeth, but the upper lip and the cheek-bones rather too long and high, and the general expression of the countenance, when not affected, more sprightly than intelligent. Therèse was a brunette, but her eye wanted softness as much as the blue orb of the brilliant Sophonisbe. Nature and Art had combined to produce their figures, and it was only the united effort of two such first-rate powers that could have created anything so admirable.

This was the first visit of the Mademoiselles Laurella to the family of Besso, for they had only returned from Marseilles at the beginning of the year, and their host had not resided at Damascus until the summer was much advanced. Of course they were well acquainted by reputation with the great Hebrew house of which the lord of the mansion was the chief. They had been brought up to esteem it the main strength and ornament of their race and religion. But the

Mademoiselles Laurella were ashamed of their race, and not fanatically devoted to their religion, which might be true, but certainly was not fashionable. Therèse, who was of a less sanguineous temperament than her sister, affected despair and unutterable humiliation, which permitted her to say before her own people a thousand disagreeable things with an air of artless frankness. The animated Sophonisbe, on the contrary, was always combating prejudice, felt persuaded that the Jews would not be so much disliked if they were better known; that all they had to do was to imitate as closely as possible the habits and customs of the nation among whom they chanced to live; and she really did believe that eventually, such was the progressive spirit of the age, a difference in religion would cease to be regarded, and that a respectable Hebrew, particularly if well dressed and well mannered, might be able to pass through society without being discovered, or at least noticed. Consummation of the destiny of the favourite people of the Creator of the universe!

Notwithstanding their practised nonchalance, the Mademoiselles Laurella were a little subdued when they entered the palace of Besso, still more so when they were presented to its master, whose manner, void of all art, yet invested with a natural dignity, asserted in an instant its superiority. Eva, whom they saw for the first time, received them like a queen, and in a dress which offered as complete a contrast to their modish attire as the beauty of her sublime countenance presented to their pretty and sparkling visages.

Madame Laurella, the mother of these young ladies, would in Europe have been still styled young. She was a Smyrniote, and had been a celebrated beauty. The rose had since then too richly expanded, but even now, with her dark eyelash charged with yamusk, her cheek touched with rouge, and her fingers tipped with henna, her still fine hair exaggerated by art or screened by her jewelled turban, she would have been a striking personage, even if it had not been for the blaze of jewels with which she was suffused and environed. The existence of this lady was concentred in her precious gems. An extreme susceptibility on this head is very prevalent among the ladies of the Levant, and the quantity of jewels that they accumulate far exceeds the general belief. Madame Laurella was without a rival in this respect, and resolved to maintain her throne: diamonds alone did not satisfy her; immense emeralds, rubies as big as pigeons' eggs, prodigious ropes of pearls, were studded and wound about every part of her rich robes. Every finger glittered, and bracelets flashed beneath her hanging sleeves. She sate in silent splendour on a divan, now and then proudly moving a fan of feathers, lost in criticism of the jewels of her friends, and in contemplation of her own.

A young man, tall and well-looking, dressed as an oriental, but with an affected, jerking air, more French than Syrian, moved jauntily about the room, speaking to several persons for a short time, shrugging his shoulders and uttering commonplaces as if they were poignant originalities.

This was Hillel Besso, the eldest son of the Besso of Aleppo, and the intended husband of Eva. Hillel too had seen the world, passed a season at Pera, where he had worn the Frank dress, and, introduced into the circles by the lady of the Austrian Internuncio, had found success and enjoyed himself. He had not however returned to Syria with any of the disgust shared by the Mademoiselles Laurella. Hillel was neither ashamed of his race nor his religion: on the contrary, he was perfectly satisfied with this life, with the family of Besso in general, and with himself particularly. Hillel was a little philosophical, had read Voltaire, and, free from prejudices, conceived himself capable of forming correct opinions. He listened smiling and in silence to Eva asserting the splendour and superiority of their race, and sighing for the restoration of their national glory, and then would say, in a whisper to a friend, and with a glance of epigrammatic airiness, "For my part, I am not so sure that we were ever better off than we are."

He stopped and conversed with Therèse Laurella, who at first was unbending, but when she found that he was a Besso, and had listened to one or two anecdotes, which indicated personal acquaintance not only with ambassadors but with ambassadors' ladies, she began to relax. In general, however, the rest of the ladies did not speak, or made only observations to each other in a very hushed voice. Conversation is not the accomplishment of these climes and circles. They *seemed content* to show their jewels to their neighbours.

There was a very fat lady, of prodigious size, the wife of Signor Yacoub Picholoroni, who was also a consul, but not a consul-general *in honorem*. She looked like a huge Chinese idol; a perpetual smile played upon her immense good-natured cheeks, and her little black eyes twinkled with continuous satisfaction. There were the Mourad Farhis and the Nassim Farhis. There were Moses Laurella and his wife, who shone with the reflected splendour of the great Laurellas, but who were really very nice people; sensible and most obliging, as all travellers must have found them. Moses Laurella was vice-consul to his brother. The Farhis had no diplomatic lustre, but they were great merchants, and worked with the house of Besso in all their enterprises. They had married two sisters, who were also their cousins. Madame Mourad Farhi was in the zenith of her renowned beauty; in the gorgeous Smyrniote style, brilliant yet languid, like a panther basking in the sunshine. Her sister also had a rich countenance, and a figure like a palm tree, while her fine brow beamed alike with intelligence and beauty. Madame Nassim was highly cultured, enthusiastic for her race, and proud of the friendship of Eva, of which she was worthy.

There were also playing about the room three or four children of such dazzling beauty and such ineffable grace that no pen can picture their seraphic glances or gestures of airy frolic. Sometimes serious, from exhaustion not from thought; sometimes wild with the witchery of infant riot;

a laughing girl with hair almost touching the ground, and large grey eyes bedewed with lustrous mischief, tumbles over an urchin who rises doubtful whether to scream or shout; sometimes they pull the robe of Besso while he talks, who goes on, as if unconscious of the interruption; sometimes they rush up to their mother or Eva for an embrace; sometimes they run up to the fat lady, look with wondering gravity in her face, and then, bursting into laughter, scud away. These are the children of a sister of Hillel Besso's, brought to Damascus for change of air. Their mother is also here, sitting at the side of Eva: a soft and pensive countenance, watching the children with her intelligent blue eyes, or beckoning to them with a beautiful hand.

The men in general remained on their legs apart, conversing as if they were on the Bourse.

Now entered, from halls beyond of less dimensions, but all decorated with similar splendour, a train of servants, two of whom carried between them a very large broad basket of silver filagree, which was filled with branches of the palm tree entwined with myrtle, while another bore a golden basket of a different shape, and which was filled with citrons just gathered. These they handed to the guests, and each guest took a branch with the right hand and a citron with the left. The conversation of Besso with Elias Laurella had been broken by their entrance, and a few minutes afterwards, the *master of the house*, looking about, held up his branch,

shook it with a rustling sound, and immediately Eva was at his side.

The daughter of Besso wore a vest of white silk, fitting close to her shape and descending to her knees; it was buttoned with large diamonds and restrained by a girdle of pearls; anklets of brilliants peeped also, every now and then, from beneath her large Mamlouk trowsers of rose-coloured silk that fell over her slippers, powdered with diamonds. Over her vest she wore the Syrian jacket, made of cherry-coloured velvet, its open arms and back richly embroidered, though these were now much concealed by her outer pelisse, a brocade of India, massy with gold, and yet relieved from heaviness by the brilliancy of its light blue tint and the dazzling fantasy of its pattern. This was loosely bound round her waist by a Moorish scarf of the colour of a blood-red orange, and bordered with a broad fringe of precious stones. Her head-dress was of the same fashion as when we first met her in the kiosk of Bethany, except that on this occasion her Syrian cap on the back of her head was covered only with diamonds, and only with diamonds was braided her long dark hair.

"They will never come," said Besso to his daughter. "It was one of his freaks. We will not wait."

"I am sure, my father, they will come," said Eva, earnestly. And indeed at this very moment, as she stood at his side, holding in one hand her palm branch, which was reposing on her bosom, and in the other her fresh citron, the

servants appeared again, ushering in two guests who had just arrived. One was quite a stranger, a young man dressed in the European fashion; the other was recognised at once by all present as the Emir of Canobia.

CHAPTER VI.

Eva had withdrawn from her father to her former remote position, the moment that she had recognised the two friends, and was therefore not in hearing when her father received them, and said — "Welcome, noble stranger! the noble Emir here, to whom a thousand welcomes, told me, that you would not be averse to joining a festival of my people."

"I would seize any apportunity to pay my respects to you," replied Tancred; "but this occasion is most agreeable to me."

"And when, noble traveller, did you arrive at Esh-Shám?"

"But this morning; we were last from Hasbeya."

Tancred then inquired after Eva, and Besso led him to his daughter.

In the mean time, the arrival of the new guests made a considerable sensation in the chamber, especially with the Mademoiselles Laurella. A young prince of the Lebanon, whatever his religion, was a distinguished and agreeable accession to their circle, but in Tancred they recognised a being at once civilized and fashionable, a Christian who could dance the Polka. Refreshing as springs in the desert to their

long languishing eyes were the sight of his white cravat and his boots of Parisian polish.

"It is one of our great national festivals," said Eva, slightly waving her palm branch; "the celebration of the Hebrew vintage — the feast of tabernacles."

The vineyards of Israel have ceased to exist, but the eternal law enjoins the children of Israel still to celebrate the vintage. A race that persist in celebrating their vintage, although they have no fruits to gather, will regain their vineyards. What sublime inexorability in the law! But what indomitable spirit in the people!

It is easy for the happier Sephardim, the Hebrews who have never quitted the sunny regions that are laved by the Midland Ocean — it is easy for them, though they have lost their heritage, to sympathise, in their beautiful Asian cities or in their Moorish and Arabian gardens, with the graceful rites that are, at least, an homage to a benignant nature. But picture to yourself the child of Israel in the dingy suburb or the squalid quarter of some bleak northern town, where there is never a sun that can at any rate ripen grapes. Yet he must celebrate the vintage of purple Palestine! The law has told him, though a denizen in an icy clime, that he must dwell for seven days in a bower, and that he must build it of the boughs of thick trees; and the Rabbins have told him that these thick trees are the palm, the myrtle, and the weeping willow. Even Sarmatia may furnish a weeping willow. The *law has told him* that he must pluck the fruit of goodly trees,

and the Rabbins have explained that goodly fruit on this occasion is confined to the citron. Perhaps, in his despair, he is obliged to fly for the candied delicacies of the grocer. His mercantile connexions will enable him, often at considerable cost, to procure some palm leaves from Canaan, which he may wave in his Synagogue while he exclaims, as the crowd did when the divine descendant of David entered Jerusalem, "Hosannah in the highest!"

There is something profoundly interesting in this devoted observance of oriental customs in the heart of our Saxon and Sclavonian cities: in these descendants of the Bedoueens, who conquered Canaan more than three thousand years ago, still celebrating that success which secured their forefathers for the first time grapes and wine.

Conceive a being born and bred in the Judenstrasse of Hamburg or Frankfort, or rather in the purlieus of our Houndsditch or Minories, born to hereditary insult, without any education, apparently without a circumstance that can develop the slightest taste or cherish the least sentiment for the beautiful, living amid fogs and filth, never treated with kindness, seldom with justice, occupied with the meanest, if not the vilest, toil, bargaining for frippery, speculating in usury, existing for ever under the concurrent influence of degrading causes which would have worn out long ago any race that was not of the unmixed blood of Caucasus, and did not adhere to the laws of Moses — conceive such a being, an object to you of prejudice, dislike, disgust, per-

haps hatred. The season arrives, and the mind and heart of that being are filled with images and passions that have been ranked in all ages among the most beautiful and the most genial of human experience; filled with a subject the most vivid, the most graceful, the most joyous, and the most exuberant — a subject which has inspired poets and which has made gods — the harvest of the grape in the native regions of the Vine.

He rises in the morning, goes early to some Whitechapel market, purchases some willow boughs for which he has previously given a commission, and which are brought probably from one of the neighbouring rivers of Essex, hastens home, cleans out the yard of his miserable tenement, builds his bower, decks it, even profusely, with the finest flowers and fruits that he can procure, the myrtle and the citron never forgotten, and hangs its roof with variegated lamps. After the service of his synagogue, he sups late with his wife and his children in the open air, as if he were in the pleasant villages of Galilee, beneath its sweet and starry sky.

Perhaps, as he is giving the Keedush, the Hebrew blessing to the Hebrew meal, breaking and distributing the bread, and sanctifying with a preliminary prayer the goblet of wine he holds, the very ceremony which the Divine Prince of Israel, nearly two thousand years ago, adopted at the most memorable of all repasts, and eternally invested with eucharistic grace; or perhaps as he is offering up the peculiar thanksgiving of the Feast of Tabernacles, praising Jehovah for the *vintage which his* children may no longer cull, but also for his

promise that they may some day again enjoy it, and his wife and his children are joining in a pious Hosanna — that is, Save us! — a party of Anglo-Saxons, very respectable men, ten-pounders, a little elevated it may be, though certainly not in honour of the vintage, pass the house, and words like these are heard;

"I say, Buggins, what 's that row?"

"Oh! it 's those cursed Jews; we 've a lot of 'em here. It is one of their horrible feasts. The Lord Mayor ought to interfere. However, things are not as bad as they used to be: they used always to crucify little boys at these hullabaloos, but now they only eat sausages made of stinking pork."

"To be sure," replies his companion, "we all make progress."

In the mean time, a burst of music sounds from the gardens of Besso of Damascus. He advances, and invites Tancred and the Emir to follow him, and, without any order or courtesy to the softer sex, who, on the contrary follow in the rear, the whole company step out of the Saracenic windows into the gardens. The mansion of Besso, which was of great extent, appeared to be built in their midst. No other roof or building was in any direction visible, yet the house was truly in the middle of the city, and the umbrageous plane trees alone produced that illimitable air which is always so pleasing and effective. The house, though lofty for an eastern mansion, was only one story in height, yet its front was covered with an external and double staircase. This, after a

promenade in the garden, the guests approached and mounted. It led to the roof or terrace of the house, which was of great size, an oblong square, and which again was a garden. Myrtle trees of a considerable height, and fragrant with many flowers, were arranged in close order along the four sides of this roof, forming a barrier which no eye from the city beneath or any neighbouring terrace could penetrate. This verdant bulwark, however, opened at each corner of the roof, which was occupied by a projecting pavilion of white marble, a light cupola of chequered carving supported by wreathed columns. From these pavilions the most charming views might be obtained of the city and the surrounding country: Damascus itself a varied mass of dark green groves, white minarets, bright gardens, and hooded domes; to the south and east, at the extremity of its rich plain, the glare of the desert; to the west the ranges of the Lebanon; while the city was backed on the north by other mountain regions which Tancred had not yet penetrated.

In the centre of the terrace was a temporary structure of a peculiar character. It was nearly forty feet long, half as many broad, and proportionately lofty. Twelve palm trees clustering with ripe fruit, and each of which seemed to spring from a flowering hedge of myrtles, supported a roof, formed with much artifice of the braided boughs of trees. These, however, only furnished an invisible framework, from which were suspended the most beautiful and delicious fruits, citron and *pomegranate*, orange, and fig, and banana, and melon, in

such thickness and profusion that they formed, as it were, a carved ceiling of rich shades and glowing colours, like the Saracenic ceiling of the mansion, while enormous bunches of grapes every now and then descended like pendents from the main body of the roof. The spaces between the palm trees were filled with a natural trellis-work of orange trees in fruit and blossom, leaving at intervals arches of entrance, whose form was indicated by bunches of the sweetest and rarest flowers.

Within was a banqueting table covered with thick white damask silk, with a border of gold about a foot in breadth, and before each guest was placed a napkin of the same fashion. The table however lacked none of the conveniences and luxuries and even ornaments of Europe. What can withstand the united influence of taste, wealth, and commerce? The choicest porcelain of France, golden goblets chiselled in Bond Street, and the prototypes of which had perhaps been won at Goodwood or Ascot, mingled with the rarest specimens of the glass of Bohemia, while the triumphant blades of Sheffield flashed in that very Syrian city whose skill in cutlery had once been a proverb. Around the table was a divan of amber-coloured satin, with many cushions, so arranged that the guests might follow either the Oriental or the European mode of seating themselves. Such was the bower or tabernacle of Besso of Damascus, prepared to celebrate the seventh day of his vintage feast.

CHAPTER VII.

"We ought to have met at Jerusalem," said Tancred to Besso, on whose right hand he was seated, "but I am happy to thank you for all your kindness, even at Damascus."

"My daughter tells me you are not uninterested in our people, which is the reason I ventured to ask you here."

"I cannot comprehend how a Christian can be uninterested in a people who have handed down to him immortal truths."

"All the world is not as sensible of the obligation as yourself, noble traveller."

"But who are the world? Do you mean the inhabitants of Europe, which is a forest not yet cleared; or the inhabitants of Asia, which is a ruin about to tumble?"

"The railroads will clear the forest," said Besso.

"And what is to become of the ruin?" asked Tancred.

"God will not forget his land."

"That is the truth; the government of this globe must be divine, and the impulse can only come from Asia."

"If your government only understood the Eastern question!" said Mr. Consul-General Laurella, pricking up his ears at some half phrase that he had caught, and addressing *Tancred across the* table. "It is more simple than you

imagine, and, before you return to England to take your seat in your parliament, I should be very happy to have some conversation with you. I think I could tell you some things —" and he gave a glance of diplomatic mystery. Tancred bowed.

"For my part," said Hillel Besso, shrugging his shoulders, and speaking in an airy tone, "it seems to me that your Eastern question is a great imbroglio that only exists in the cabinets of diplomatists. Why should there be any Eastern question? All is very well as it is. At least, we might be worse — I think we might be worse."

"I am so happy to find myself once more among you," whispered Fakredeen to his neighbour, Madame Mourad Farhi. "This is my real home."

"All here must be happy and honoured to see you, too, noble Emir."

"And the good Signor Mourad — I am afraid I am not a favourite of his?" pursued Fakredeen, meditating a loan.

"I never heard my husband speak of you, noble Emir, but with the greatest consideration."

"There is no man I respect so much," said Fakredeen; "no one in whom I have such a thorough confidence. Excepting our dear host, who is really my father, there is no one on whose judgment I would so implicitly rely. Tell him all that, my dear Madame Mourad, for I wish him to respect me."

"I admire his hair so much," whispered Therèse Laurella, in an audible voice to her sister, across the broad form of the ever-smiling Madame Picholoroni. "'T is such a relief after our dreadful turbans."

"And his costume — so becoming! I wonder how any civilized being can wear the sort of things we see about us. 'T is really altogether like a wardrobe of the Comedie."

"Well, Sophonisbe," said the sensible Moses Laurella, "I admire the Franks very much; they have many qualities which I could wish our Levantines shared; but I confess that I do not think that their strong point is their costume."

"Oh, my dear uncle!" said Therèse; "look at that beautiful white cravat. What have we like it? So simple, so distinguished! Such good taste! And then the boots. Think of our dreadful slippers! powdered with pearls and all sorts of trash of that kind, by the side of that lovely French polish."

"He must be terribly ennuyé here," said Therèse to Sophonisbe, with a look of the initiated.

"Indeed, I should think so: no balls, not an opera; I quite pity him. What could have induced him to come here?"

"I should think he must be attached to some one," said Therèse; "he looks unhappy."

"There is not a person near him with whom he can have *an idea in common*."

"Except Mr. Hillel Besso," said Therèse. "He appears to be quite enlightened. I spoke to him a little before dinner. He has been a winter at Pera, and went to all the balls."

"Lord Palmerston understood the Eastern question to a certain degree," said Mr. Consul-General Laurella; "but, had I been in the service of the queen of England, I could have told him some things," and he mysteriously paused.

"I cannot endure this eternal chatter about Palmerston," said the Emir, rather pettishly. "Are there no other statesmen in the world besides Palmerston? And what should he know about the Eastern question, who never was in the East?"

"Ah, noble Emir, these are questions of the high diplomacy. They cannot be treated unless by the cabinets which have traditions."

"I could settle the Eastern question in a month, if I were disposed," said Fakredeen.

Mr. Consul-General Laurella smiled superciliously, and then said — "But the question is, what is the Eastern question?"

"For my part," said Hillel Besso, in a most epigrammatic manner, "I do not see the use of settling anything."

"The Eastern question is, who shall govern the Mediterranean," said the Emir. "There are only two powers

who can do it — Egypt and Syria. As for the English, the Russians, the Franks, your friends the Austrians — they are strangers. They come, and they will go; but Syria and Egypt will always remain."

"Egypt has tried, and failed."

"Then let Syria try, and succeed."

"Do you visit Egypt before you return from the East, noble Sir?" asked Besso, of Tancred.

"I have not thought of my return; but I should not be sorry to visit Egypt. It is a country that rather perplexes us in Europe. It has undergone great changes."

Besso shook his head, and slightly smiled.

"Egypt," said he, "never changes. 'T is the same land as in the days of the Pharaohs: governed on their principles of political economy, with a Hebrew for prime minister."

"A Hebrew for prime minister!"

"Even so: Artim Bey, the present prime minister of Egypt, formerly the Pacha's envoy at Paris, and by far the best political head in the Levant, is not only the successor but the descendant of Joseph."

"He must be added then to your friend M. de Sidonia's list of living Hebrew statesmen," said Tancred.

"We have our share of the government of the world," said Besso.

"It seems to me that you govern every land except your own."

"*That might* have been done in '39," said Besso,

musingly; "but why speak of a subject which can little interest you?"

"Can little interest me!" exclaimed Tancred. "What other subject should interest me! More than six centuries ago, the government of that land interested my ancestor, and he came here to achieve it."

The stars were shining before they quitted the Arabian tabernacle of Besso. The air was just as soft as a sweet summer English noon, and quite as still. The pavilions of the terrace and the surrounding bowers were illuminated by the varying tints of a thousand lamps. Bright carpets and rich cushions were thrown about for those who cared to recline; the brothers Farhi, for example, and indeed most of the men, smoking inestimable nargillies. The Consul-General Laurella begged permission to present Lord Montacute to his daughters, Therèse and Sophonisbe, who, resolved to show to him that Damascus was not altogether as barbarous as he deemed it, began talking of new dances and the last opera. Tancred would have found great difficulty in sustaining his part in the conversation, had not the young ladies fortunately been requested to favour those present with a specimen of the art in which they excelled, which they did after much solicitation, vowing that they had no voice to-night, and that it was impossible at all times to sing except in a chamber.

"For my part," said Hillel Besso, with an extremely piquant air, "music in a chamber is very charming, but I think also in the open air, it is not so bad."

Tancred took advantage of this movement to approach Eva, who was conversing, as they took their evening walk, with the soft-eyed sister of Hillel and Madame Nassim Farhi — a group of women, that the drawing-rooms of Europe and the hareems of Asia could perhaps not have rivalled.

"The Mademoiselles Laurella are very accomplished," said Tancred, "but at Damascus I am not content to hear anything but sack-buts and psalteries."

"But in Europe your finest music is on the subjects of our history," said Eva.

"Naturally," said Tancred, "music alone can do justice to such themes. They baffle the uninspired pen."

"There is a prayer which the Mademoiselles Laurella once sang, a prayer of Moses in Egypt," said Mademoiselle Nassim, somewhat timidly. "It is very fine."

"I wish they would favour us with it," said Eva; "I will ask Hillel to request that kindness," and she beckoned to Hillel, who sauntered toward her, and listened to her whispered wish with a smile of supercilious complacency.

"At present they are going to favour us with Don Pasquale," he said, shrugging his shoulders. "A prayer is a very fine thing, but for my part, at this hour I think a serenade is not so bad."

"And how do you like my father?" said Eva, to Tancred, in a hesitating tone, and yet with a glance of blended curiosity *and pride.*

"He is exactly what Sidonia prepared me for: worthy not only of being your father, but the father of mankind."

"The Moslemin say that we are near Paradise at Damascus," said Madame Nassim, "and that Adam was fashioned out of our red earth."

"He much wished to see you," said Eva, "and your meeting is as unexpected as to him it is agreeable."

"We ought to have met long before," said Tancred. "When I first arrived at Jerusalem, I ought to have hastened to his threshold. The fault and the misfortune were mine. I scarcely deserved the happiness of knowing you."

"I am happy we have all met, and that you now understand us a little. When you go back to England, you will defend us when we are defamed? You will not let them persecute us, as they did a few years back, because they said we crucified their children at the feast of our passover?"

"I shall not go back to England," said Tancred, colouring; "and if you are persecuted, I hope I shall be able to defend you here."

The glowing sky, the soft, mellow atmosphere, the brilliant circumstances around, flowers and flashing gems, rich dresses and ravishing music, and every form of splendour and luxury, combined to create a scene, that to Tancred was startling, as well from its beauty as its novel character. A rich note of Therèse Laurella for an instant arrested their conversation. They were silent while it lingered on their ear. Then Tancred said to the soft-eyed sister of Hillel — "All that

we require here to complete the spell are your beautiful children."

"They sleep," said the lady, "and lose little by not being present, for, like the Queen of Sheba, I doubt not they are dreaming of music and flowers."

"They say that the children of our race are the most beautiful in the world," said Eva, "but that, when they grow up, they do not fulfil the promise of their infancy."

"That were scarcely possible," said the soft-eyed mother.

"It is the sense of shame that comes on them and dims their lustre," said Eva. "Instead of joyousness and frank hilarity, anxiety and a shrinking reserve are soon impressed upon the youthful Hebrew visage. It is the seal of ignominy. The dreadful secret that they are an expatriated and persecuted race is soon revealed to them, at least among the humbler classes. The children of our house are bred in noble thoughts, and taught self-respect. Their countenances will not change."

And the countenance, from whose beautiful mouth issued those gallant words — what of that? It was one that might wilder the wisest. Tancred gazed upon it with serious yet fond abstraction. All heavenly and heroic thoughts gathered around the image of this woman. From the first moment of their meeting at Bethany to this hour of sacred festival, all the passages of his life in which she had been present flashed through his mind. For a moment he was in the ruins of the Arabian desert, and recalled her glance of sweet solicitude, when,

recovered by her skill and her devotion, he recognised the fair stranger whose words had, ere that, touched the recesses of his spirit, and attuned his mind to high and holiest mysteries. Now again their eyes met; an ineffable expression suffused the countenance of Lord Montacute. He sighed.

At this moment Hillel and Fakredeen advanced with a hurried air of gaiety. Hillel offered his hand to Eva with jaunty grace, exclaiming at the same time, "Ladies, if you like to follow us, you shall see a casket just arrived from Marseilles, and which Eva will favour me by carrying to Aleppo. It was chosen for me by the Lady of the Austrian Internuncio, who is now at Paris. For my part, I do not see much advantage in the diplomatic corps, if occasionally they do not execute a commission for one."

Hillel hurried Eva away, accompanied by his sister and Madame Nassim. Tancred and Fakredeen remained behind.

"Who is this man?" said Tancred.

"'T is her affianced," said the Emir; "the man who has robbed me of my natural bride. It is to be hoped, however, that, when she is married, Besso will adopt me as his son, which in a certain sense I am, having been fostered by his wife. If he do not leave me his fortune, he ought at least to take up all my bills in Syria? Don't you think so, my Tancred?"

"What?" said Tancred with a dreamy look.

There was a burst of laughter in the distance.

"Come, come," said Fakredeen, "see how they are all

gathering round the marriage casket. Even Nassim Farhi has risen. I must go and talk to him — he has impulses, that man, at least compared with his brother; Mourad, is a stone — a precious stone though — and you cannot magnetize him through his wife, for she has not an idea; but Mademoiselle Nassim is immensely mesmeric. Come, come, Tancred."

"I follow."

But instead of following his friend, Tancred entered one of the marble pavilions that jutted out from each corner of the terraced roof, and commanded splendid views of the glittering and gardened city. The moon had risen over that unrivalled landscape; the white minarets sparkled in its beam, and the vast hoods of the cupolaed mosques were suffused with its radiancy or reposed in dark shadow, almost as black as the cypress groves out of which they rose. In the extreme distance, beyond the fertile plain, was the desert, bright as the line of the sea, while otherwise around him extended the chains of Lebanon and of the North.

The countenance of Tancred was more than serious, it was sad, as, leaning against one of the wreathed marble pillars, he sighed and murmured: "If I were thou, most beautiful Damascus, Aleppo should not rob me of such a gem! But I must tear up these thoughts from my heart by their roots, and remember that I am ordained for other deeds."

CHAPTER VIII.

After taking the bath on his arrival at Damascus, having his beard arranged by a barber of distinction, and dressing himself in a fresh white suit, as was his custom when in residence, with his turban of the same colour arranged a little aside, for Baroni was scrupulous as to his appearance, he hired a donkey and made his way to the great bazaar. The part of the city through which he proceeded was very crowded and bustling — narrow streets, with mats slung across, to shield from the sun the swarming population beneath. His accustomed step was familiar with every winding of the emporium of the city; he threaded without hesitation the complicated mazes of those interminable arcades. Now he was in the street of the armourers, now among the sellers of shawls; the prints of Manchester were here unfolded, there the silks of India; sometimes he sauntered by a range of shops gay with yellow papooshes and scarlet slippers, and then hurried by the stalls and shelves stored with the fatal frippery of the East, in which it is said the plague in some shape or other always lurks and lingers. This locality however, indicated that Baroni was already approaching the purlieus of the chief places; the great population had already much diminished, the brilliancy of the scene much dimmed; there was no longer the swarm of itinerant traders who live

by promptly satisfying the wants of the visitors to the bazaar in the shape of a pipe or an ice, a cup of sherbet or of coffee, or a basket of delicious fruit. The passengers were few, and all seemed busy: some Armenians, a Hebrew physician and his page, the gliding phantoms of some winding-sheets, which were in fact women.

Baroni turned into an arcade, well built, spacious, airy, and very neatly fitted up. This was the bazaar of the dealers in drugs. Here, too, spices are sold, all sorts of dyewoods, and especially the choice gums for which Arabia is still celebrated, and which Syria would fain rival by the aromatic juices of her pistachio and her apricot trees.

Seated on what may be called his counter, smoking a nargilly, in a mulberry-coloured robe, bordered with fur, and a dark turban, was a middle-aged man of sinister countenance and air, a long hook nose and a light blue eye.

"Welcome, Effendi," he said, when he observed Baroni, "many welcomes! And how long have you been at Esh Sham?"

"Not too long," said Baroni; "and have you been here since my last visit?"

"Here and there," said the man, offering him his pipe.

"And how are our friends in the mountains?" said Baroni, touching the tube with his lips and returning it.

"They live," said the man.

"That 's something," said Baroni.

"*Have* you been in the land of the Franks?" said the man.

"I am always in the land of the Franks," said Baroni, "and about."

"You don't know any one who wants a parcel of scammony?" said the man.

"I don't know that I don't," said Baroni, mysteriously.

"I have a very fine parcel," said the man; "it is very scarce."

"No starch or myrrh in it?" asked Baroni.

"Do you think I am a Jew?" said the man.

"I never could make out what you were, friend Darkush; but as for scammony, I could throw a good deal of business in your way at this moment, to say nothing of galls and tragacanth."

"As for tragacanth," said Darkush, "it 's known that no one in Esh Sham has pure tragacanth except me; as for galls, every foundling in Syria thinks he can deal in afis, but is it afis of Moussoul, Effendi?"

"What you say are the words of truth, good Darkush; I could recommend you with a safe conscience. I dreamt last night that there would be many piastres pass between us this visit."

"What is the use of friends unless they help you in the hour of adversity!" exclaimed Darkush.

"You speak ever the words of truth. I am myself in a valley of dark shadows. I am travelling with a young English capitani, a prince of many tails, and he has declared that he

will entirely extinguish my existence, unless he pays a visit to the Queen of the Ansarey."

"Let him first pay a visit to King Soliman in the cities of the Gin," said Darkush, doggedly.

"I am not sure that he will not, some time or other," replied Baroni, "for he is a man who will not take nay. But now let us talk of scammony," he added, vaulting on the counter, and seating himself by the side of Darkush; "one might get more by arranging this visit to your mountains than by enjoying an appalto of all its gums, friend Darkush; but if it cannot be, it cannot be."

"It cannot be."

"Let us talk then of scammony. You remember my old master, Darkush?"

"There are many things that are forgotten, but he is not one."

"This capitani with whom I travel, this prince of many tails, is his friend. If you serve me now, you serve also him who served you."

"There are things that can be done, and there are things that cannot be done."

"Let us talk then of scammony. But fifteen years ago, when we first met, friend Darkush, you did not say nay to M. de Sidonia. It was the plague alone that stopped us."

"The snow on the Mountain is not the same snow as fifteen years ago, Effendi. All things change!"

"*Let* us talk then of scammony. The Ansarey have friends

in other lands, but if they will not listen to them, many kind words will be lost. Things also might happen which would make everybody's shadow longer, but if there be no sun, their shadows cannot be seen."

Darkush shrugged his shoulders.

"If the sun of friendship does not illumine me," resumed Baroni, "I am entirely lost in the bottomless vale. Truly, I would give a thousand piastres if I could save my head by taking the capitani to your mountains."

"The princes of Franguestan cannot take off heads," observed Darkush. "All they can do is to banish you to islands inhabited by demons."

"But the capitani of whom I speak is prince of many tails, is the brother of queens. Even the great Queen of the English, they say, is his sister."

"He who serves queens may expect backsheesh."

"And you serve a queen, Darkush?"

"Which is the reason I cannot give you a pass for the mountains, as I would have done, fifteen years ago, in the time of her father."

"Are her commands, then, so strict?"

"That she should see neither Moslem nor Christian. She is at war with both, and will be for ever, for the quarrel between them is beyond the power of man to remove."

"And what may it be?"

"That you can learn only in the mountains of the Ansarey," said Darkush, with a malignant smile.

Baroni fell into a musing mood. After a few moments' thought, he looked up, and said: "What you have told me, friend Darkush, is very interesting, and throws light on many things. This young prince, whom I serve, is a friend to your race, and knows well why you are at war both with Moslem and Christian, for he is so himself. But he is a man sparing of words, dark in thought, and terrible to deal with. Why he wishes to visit your people I dared not inquire, but now I guess from what you have let fall, that he is an Ansarey himself. He has come from a far land merely to visit his race, a man who is a prince among the people, to whom piastres are as water. I doubt not he has much to say to your queen: things might have happened that would have lengthened all our shadows; but never mind, what cannot be, cannot be: let us talk then of scammony."

"You think he is one?" said Darkush, in a lower tone, and looking very inquiringly.

"I do," said Baroni.

"And what do you mean by one?" said Darkush.

"That is exactly the secret wich I never could penetrate."

"I cannot give a pass to the mountains," said Darkush, "but the sympathy of friends is a river flowing in a fair garden. If this prince, whose words and thoughts are dark, should indeed be one — Could I see him, Effendi?"

"*It is a subject* on which I dare not speak to him," said

Baroni. "I hinted at his coming here: his brow was the brow of Eblis, his eye flashed like the red lightning of the Kamsin — it is impossible! What cannot be done, cannot be done. He must return to the land of his fathers, unseen by your queen, of whom he is perhaps a brother; he will live, hating alike Moslem and Christian, but he will banish me for ever to islands of many demons."

"The queen shall know of these strange things," said Darkush, "and we will wait for her words."

"Wait for the Mecca caravan!" exclaimed Baroni. "You know not the child of storms, who is my master, and that is ever a reason why I think he must be one of you. For had he been softened by Christianity or civilized by the Koran —"

"Unripe figs for your Christianity and your Koran!" exclaimed Darkush. "Do you know what we think of your Christianity and your Koran?"

"No," said Baroni, quietly. "Tell me."

"You will learn in our mountains," said Darkush.

"Then you mean to let me go there?"

"If the queen permit you," said Darkush.

"It is three hundred miles to your country, if it be an hour's journey," said Baroni. "What with sending the message and receiving the answer, to say nothing of the delays which must occur with a woman and a queen in the case, the fountains of Esh Sham will have run dry before we hear that our advance is forbidden."

Darkush shook his head, and yet smiled:

"By the sunset of to-morrow, Effendi, I could say, ay or nay. Tell me what scammony you want, and it shall be done."

"Write down in your tablets how much you can let me have," said Baroni, "and I will pay you for it to-morrow. As for the goods themselves, you may keep them for me, until I ask you for them; perhaps the next time I travel with a capitani who is one of yourselves."

Darkush threw aside the tube of his nargilly, and, putting his hand very gently into the breast of his robe, he drew out a pigeon, dove-coloured, but with large bright black eyes. The pigeon seemed very knowing and very proud, as he rested on his master's two fingers.

"Hah, hah! my Karaguus — my black eyes," exclaimed Darkush. "What, is he going on a little journey to somebody! Yes, we can trust Karaguus, for he is one of us. Effendi, to-morrow at sunset, at your khan, for the bazaar will be closed, you shall hear from me."

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

At the black gorge of a mountain pass sate, like sentries, two horsemen. Their dress was that of the Kurds — white turbans, a black shirt girt with cords, on their back a long lance, by their side a crooked sword, and in their girdle a brace of pistols.

Before them extended a wide, but mountainous landscape: after the small and very rugged plain on the brink of which they were posted, many hilly ridges, finally a lofty range. The general character of the scene was severe and savage; the contiguous rocks were black and riven, the hills barren and stony, the granite peaks of the more eminent heights uncovered, except occasionally by the snow. Yet, notwithstanding the general aridity of its appearance, the country itself was not unfruitful. The concealed vegetation of the valleys was not inconsiderable, and was highly cherished; the less precipitous cliffs, too, were cut into terraces, and covered with artificial soil. The numerous villages intimated that the country was well populated. The inhabitants produced suffi-

cient wine and corn for their own use, were clothed in garments woven by themselves, and possessed some command over the products of other countries by the gums, the bees'-wax, snd the goats' wool, which they could offer in exchange.

"I have seen two eagles over Gibel Kiflis twice this morning," said one of the horsemen to his companion. "What does that portend?"

"A good backsheesh for our queen, comrade. If these children of Franguestan can pay a princess's dower to visit some columns in the desert, like Tadmor, they may well give us the golden keys of their treasury when they enter where none should go but those who are —"

"But they say that this Frank is one."

"It has never been known that there were any among the Franks," replied his comrade, shaking his head. "The Franks are all Nazareny, and before they were Nazareny they were savages, and lived in caves."

"But Keferinis has given the word, that all are to guard over the strangers as over the queen herself, and that one is a prince, who is unquestionably one of us."

"My father had counted a hundred and ten years when he left us, Azaz, and he had twenty-four children, and when he was at the point of death he told us two things; one was never to forget what we were, and the other, that never in his time had one like us ever visited our country."

"Eagles again fly over Gibel Kiflis: methinks the strangers *must be* at hand."

"May their visit lead to no evil to them or to us!"

"Have you misgivings?"

"We are alone among men: let us remain so."

"You are right. I was once at Haleb (Aleppo); I will never willingly find myself there again."

"Give me the mountains, the mountains of our fathers, and the beautiful things that can be seen only by one of us!"

"They are not to be found in the bazaars of Haleb: in the gardens of Damascus, they are not to be sought."

"Oh! who is like the queen who reigns over us? I know to whom she is to be compared, but I will not say; yet you too know, my brother in arms."

"Yes; there are things which are not known in the bazaars of Haleb: in the gardens of Damascus, they are not to be sought."

Karaguus, the black-eyed pigeon, brought tidings to the Queen of the Ansarey, from her agent Darkush, that two young princes — one a Syrian, the other a Frank, wished to enter her territories to confer with her on grave matters, and that he had reason to believe that one of the princes, the Frank — strange, incredible as it might sound, was one of themselves. On the evening of the next day, very weary, came Rubylips, the brother of Blackeyes, with the reply of her majesty, ordering Darkush to grant the solicited pass, but limiting the permission of entrance into her dominions to the two princes and two attendants. As one of these, Baroni figured. They did not travel very rapidly. Tancred was glad

to seize the occasion to visit Hameh and Aleppo on his journey.

It was after quitting the latter city, and crossing the river Koweik, that they approached the region which was the object of their expedition. What certainly did not contribute to render their progress less difficult and dangerous, was the circumstance that war at this moment was waged between the Queen of the Ansarey and the Pacha of Aleppo. The Turkish potentate had levied tribute on some villages which owned her sway, and which, as he maintained, were not included in the ancient composition paid by the Ansarey to the Porte in full of all demands. The consequence was, that parties of the Ansarey occasionally issued from their passes and scoured the plain of Aleppo. There was also an understanding between the Ansarey and the Kurds, that, whenever any quarrel occurred between the mountaineers and the Turks, the Kurds, who resembled the inhabitants of the mountain in their general appearance, should, under the title of Ansarey, take this opportunity of ravage. Darkush, however, had given Baroni credentials to the secret agent of the Ansarey at Aleppo; and, with his instructions and assistance, the difficulties, which otherwise might have been insuperable, were overcome; and thus it was that the sentries stationed at the mouth of the black ravine, which led to the fortress palace of the queen, were now hourly expecting the appearance of the princes.

A horseman at full gallop issued from the hills, and came

bounding over the stony plain; he shouted to the sentries as he passed them, announcing the arrival of the strangers, and continued his pace through the defile. Soon afterwards appeared the cavalcade of the princes; themselves, their two attendants, and a party of horsemen, with white turbans and long lances.

Tancred and Fakredeen rode horses of a high race. But great as is the pleasure of being well mounted, it was not that circumstance alone which lit up their eyes with even unwonted fire, and tinged their cheek with a triumphant glow. Their expedition had been delightful; full of adventure, novelty, and suspense. They had encountered difficulties and they had overcome them. They had a great purpose — they were on the eve of a stirring incident. They were young, daring, and brilliant.

"A strong position," said Tancred, as they entered the defile.

"O! my Tancred, what things we have seen together!" exclaimed Fakredeen. "And what is to follow!"

The defile was not long, and it was almost unbending. It terminated in a table-land of very limited extent, bounded by a rocky chain, on one of the front and more moderate elevations of which was the appearance of an extensive fortification; though, as the travellers approached it, they perceived that, in many instances, art had only availed itself of the natural advantages of the position, and that the towers and turrets

were carved out of the living rock which formed the impregnable bulwarks and escarpments.

The cavalcade, at a quick pace, soon gained the ascending and winding road that conducted them to a tall and massy gateway, the top of which was formed of one prodigious stone. The iron portal opening displayed a covered way cut out of the rock, and broad enough to permit the entrance of two horsemen abreast. This way was of considerable length, and so dark that they were obliged to be preceded by torch-bearers. Thence they issued into a large court yard, the sunshine of which was startling and almost painful, after their late passage. The court was surrounded by buildings of different styles and proportions; the further end, and, as it were, centre of the whole, being a very broad, square, and stunted brick tower, immediately behind which rose the granite peaks of the mountains.

There were some horsemen in the court, and many attendants on foot, who came forward and assisted the guests to alight. Tancred and Fakredeen did not speak, but exchanged glances which expressed their secret thoughts. Perhaps they were of the same opinion as Baroni, that, difficult as it was to arrive there, it might not be more easy to return. However, God is great! — a consolatory truth that had sustained Baroni under many trials.

They were ushered into a pavilion at the side of the court, and thence into a commodious divan, which opened upon another and smaller court, in which were some acacia trees.

As usual, pipes and coffee were brought. Baroni was outside, with the other attendant, stowing away the luggage. A man plainly but neatly dressed, very slender, and wrinkled, with a stooping gait but a glittering eye, came into the chamber, and, in a hushed voice, with many smiles, much humility, but the lurking air of a master, welcomed them to Gindarics. Then, seating himself on the divan, he clapped his hands, and an attendant brought him his nargilly.

"I presume," said Tancred, "that the Emir and myself have the honour of conversing with the Lord Keferinis." Thus he addressed this celebrated eunuch, who is prime minister of the Queen of the Ansarey.

"The Prince of England," replied Keferinis, bowing, and speaking in a very affected voice and in a very affected manner, "must not expect the luxuries of the world amid these mountains. Born in London, which is surrounded by the sea, and with an immense slave population at your command, you have advantages with which the Ansarey cannot compete, unjustly deprived, as they have been, of their port; and unable, in the present diminished supply of the markets, to purchase slaves as heretofore from the Turkomans and the Kurds."

"I suppose the Russians interfere with your markets?" said Fakredeen.

"The noble Emir of the Lebanon has expressed himself with infinite exactitude," said Keferinis. "The Russians now entirely stock their hareems from the north of Asia."

"The Lord Keferinis has been a great traveller, I apprehend?" said Tancred.

"The Prince of England has expressed himself with extreme exactitude, and with flattering grace," replied Keferinis. "I have indeed visited all the Syrian cities, except Jerusalem, which no one wishes to see, and which," he added, in a very sweet calm tone, "is unquestionably a place fit only for hogs."

Tancred started, but repressed himself.

"Have you been in Lebanon?" asked Fakredeen.

"Noble Emir, I have been the guest of princes of your illustrious house. Conversations have passed between me and the Emir Bescheer," he added, with a significant look. "Perhaps, had events happened which did not occur, the great Emir Bescheer might not at this moment have been a prisoner at Stamboul, among those who, with infinite exactitude, may be described as the most obscene sons of very intolerable barbarians."

"And why did not you and the Emir Bescheer agree?" inquired Fakredeen, eagerly. "Why has there never been a right understanding between your people and the house of Shehaab? United, we should not only command Syria, but we might do more — we might control Asia itself!"

"The noble Emir has expressed himself with inexpressible grace. The power of the Ansarey cannot be too *highly estimated.*"

"Is it true that your Sovereign can bring five and twenty thousand men into the field?" asked Tancred.

"Five and twenty thousand men," replied Keferinis, with insinuating courtesy — "each of whom could beat nine Maronites, and consequently three Druses."

"Five and twenty thousand figs for your five and twenty thousand men!" exclaimed Fakredeen, laughing.

At this moment entered four pages and four maidens bringing sweetmeats from the Queen and goblets of iced water. They bowed; Keferinis indicated their purpose, and when they had fulfilled their office they disappeared, but the seasonable interruption had turned the conversation, and prevented Fakredeen making a sharp retort. Now they talked of the Queen, who, Keferinis said, would be graciously pleased not to see them to-day, and might not even see them for a week, which agreeable intelligence was communicated in the most affable manner, as if it were good news, or a compliment at least.

"The name of the Queen's father was Suedia?" said Fakredeen.

"The name of the Queen's father was Suedia," replied Keferinis.

"And the name of the Queen's mother —"

"Is of no consequence," observed Keferinis, "for she was a slave, and not one of us, and therefore may with singular exactitude be described as nothing."

"Is she the first Queen who has reigned over the Ansarey?" inquired Tancred.

"The first since we have settled in these mountains," replied Keferinis.

"And where were you settled before?" inquired Fakredeen.

"Truly," replied Keferinis, "in cities which never can be forgotten, and therefore need never be mentioned."

Tancred and Fakredeen were very desirous of learning the name of the Queen, but were too well-bred directly to make the inquiry of Keferinis. They had endeavoured to obtain the information as they travelled along, but although every Ansarey most obligingly answered their inquiry, they invariably found, on comparing notes, that every time they were favoured with a different piece of information. At last, Baroni informed them that it was useless to pursue their researches, as he was, from various reasons, convinced that no Ansarey was permitted to give any information of his country, race, government, or creed, although he was far too civil ever to refuse an apparently satisfactory answer to every question. As for Keferinis, although he was very conversable, the companions observed that he always made it a rule to dilate upon subjects and countries with which he had no acquaintance, and he expressed himself in so affected a manner, and with such an amplification of useless phraseology, that, though he was *always talking*, they seemed at the end of the day to be little

more acquainted with the Ansarey and their sovereign than when Baroni first opened the subject of their visit to Darkush at Damascus.

CHAPTER II.

"Away, away, Cypros! — I can remain no more — my heart beats so."

"Sweet lady," replied Cypros, "it is surprise that agitates you."

"Is it surprise, Cypros? I did not know it was surprise. Then I never was surprised before."

"I think they were surprised, sweet lady," said Cypros, smiling.

"Hush, you are laughing very loud, my Cypros."

"Is that laughter, sweet lady? I did not know it was laughter. Then I never laughed before."

"I would they should know nothing either of our smiles or of our sighs, my Cypros."

She who said this was a girl of eighteen summers; her features very Greek, her complexion radiant, hair dark as night, and eyes of the colour of the violet. Her beautiful countenance, however, was at this moment nearly shrouded by her veil, although no one could possibly behold it, excepting her attendant, younger even than herself, and fresh and fair as a flower.

They were hurrying along a wooden gallery, which led behind the upper part of the divan occupied by the travellers, *to the great square* central tower of the quadrangle, which we

have already noticed, and as the truth must always, or at least eventually, come out, it shall not be concealed that, availing themselves of a convenient, perhaps irresistible position, the fair fugitives had peeped into the chamber and had made even minute observations on its inhabitants with impunity. Suddenly, Fakredeen rising from his seat, a panic had seized them and they hurried away.

The gallery led to a flight of steps, and the flight of steps into the first of several chambers without decoration, and with no other furniture than an eastern apartment always offers, the cushioned seat which surrounds at least two-thirds of the room. At length they entered a small alcove, rudely painted in arabesque, but in a classic Ionic pattern; the alcove opened into a garden, or rather court of myrtles with a fountain. An antelope, an Angora cat, two Persian greyhounds, were basking on the sunny turf, and there were many birds about, in rude but capacious cages.

"We are safe," said the lady, dropping on the divan; "I think we must have been seen."

"That was clearly impossible," said Cypros.

"Well, we must be seen at last," said the lady. "Heigho! I never shall be able to receive them, if my heart beat so."

"I would let them wait a few days, sweet lady," said Cypros, "and then you would get more used to them."

"I shall never be more used to them. Besides, it is rude and inhospitable not to see them. Yesterday there was an excuse — they were wearied, or I had a right to suppose they

were, with their travelling — and to-day, there ought to be an excuse for not receiving them to-day. What is it Cypros?"

"I dare say they will be quite content, if to-day you fix the time when you will receive them, sweet lady."

"But I shall not be content, Cypros. Having seen them once, I wish to see them again, and one cannot always be walking by accident in the gallery."

"Then I would see them to-day, sweet lady. Shall I send for the noble Keferinis?"

"I wish I were Cypros, and you were — Hark! what is that?"

"'T is only the antelope, sweet lady."

"I thought it was — Now tell me, my Cypros, which of these two princes do you think is he who is one of us?"

"Oh, really, sweet lady, I think they are both so handsome!"

"Yet so unlike," said the lady.

"Well, they are unlike," said Cypros, "and yet —"

"And what?"

"The fair one has a complexion almost as radiant as your own, sweet lady."

"And eyes as blue: no, they are too light. And so, as there is a likeness, you think he is the one?"

"I am sure I wish they were both belonging to us," said Cypros.

"Ah, me!" said the lady, "'t is not the bright-faced *prince whom I hold* to be one of us. No, no, my Cypros.

Think awhile, sweet girl. The visage, the head of the other, have you not seen them before? Have you not seen something like them? That head so proudly placed upon the shoulders; that hair — that hyacinthine hair — that lofty forehead, that proud lip, that face so refined and yet so haughty, does it not recall anything? Think, Cypros — think!"

"It does; sweet lady."

"Tell me; whisper it to me; it is a name not to be lightly mentioned."

Cypros advanced, and bending her head, breathed a word in the ear of the lady, who instantly, blushing deeply, murmured with a faint smile — "Yes."

"It is he then," said Cypros, "who is one of us."

CHAPTER III.

Our travellers were speculating, not very sanguinely, on the possible resources which Gindarics might supply for the amusement of a week, when, to their great relief, they were informed by Keferinis, that the queen had fixed noon on this the day after their arrival, to receive them. And accordingly at that time some attendants, not accompanying however the chief minister, waited on Tancred and Fakredeen, and announced that they were commanded to usher them to the royal presence. Quitting their apartments, they mounted a flight of steps, which led to the wooden gallery, along which they pursued their course. At its termination were two sentries with their lances. Then they descended a corresponding flight of stairs, and entered a chamber where they were received by pages; the next room, of larger size, was crowded, and here they remained for a few minutes. Then they were ushered into the presence.

The young Queen of the Ansarey could not have received them with an air more impassive had she been holding a levée at St. James's. Seated on her divan, she was clothed in a purple robe; her long dark hair descended over her shoulders, and was drawn off her white forehead, which was bound with a broad circlet of pure gold and of great antiquity. On her right hand, stood Keferinis, the captain of

her guard, and a priestly-looking person with a long white beard, and then at some distance from these three personages, a considerable number of individuals, between whose appearance and that of her ordinary subjects there was little difference. On her left hand were immediately three female attendants, young and pretty; at some distance from them, a troop of female slaves; and again, at a still further distance, another body of her subjects in their white turbans and their black dresses. The chamber was spacious, and rudely painted in the Ionic style.

"It is most undoubtedly requested, and in a vein of the most condescending friendship, by the perfectly irresistible Queen, that the princes should be seated," said Keferinis, and accordingly Tancred occupied his allotted seat on the right of the Queen, though at some distance, and the young Emir filled his on the left. Fakredeen was dressed in Syrian splendour, a blaze of shawls and jewelled arms; but Tancred retained on this, as he had done on every other occasion, the European dress, though in the present instance it assumed a somewhat more brilliant shape than ordinary, in the dark green regimentals, the rich embroidery, and the flowing plume of the Bellamont Yeomanry Cavalry.

"You are a prince of the English," said the Queen to Tancred.

"I am an Englishman," he replied, "and a subject of our Queen, for we also have the good fortune to be ruled over by the young and the fair."

"My fathers and the house of Shehaab have been ever friends," she continued, turning to Fakredeen.

"May they ever continue so!" he replied. "For if the Shehaabs and the Ansarey are of one mind, Syria is no longer earth, but indeed paradise."

"You live much in ships?" said the Queen, turning to Tancred.

"We are an insular people," he answered, somewhat confusedly, but the perfectly informed Keferinis came to the succour both of Tancred and of his sovereign.

"The English live in ships only during six months of the year, principally when they go to India, the rest entirely at their country houses."

"Ships are required to take you to India?" said her majesty.

Tancred bowed assent.

"Is your Queen about my age?"

"She was as young as your Majesty when she began to reign."

"And how long has she reigned?"

"Some seven years or so."

"Has she a castle?"

"Her Majesty generally resides in a very famous castle."

"Very strong, I suppose?"

"Strong enough."

"The Emir Bescheer remains at Stamboul?"

"*He is now*, I believe, at Brusa," replied Fakredeen.

"Does he like Brusa?"

"Not as much as Stamboul."

"Is Stamboul the largest city in the world?"

"I apprehend by no means," said Fakredeen.

"What is larger?"

"London is larger — the great city of the English, from which the prince comes — Paris is also larger, but not so large as London."

"How many persons are there in Stamboul?"

"More than half a million."

"Have you seen Antakia (Antioch)?" the Queen inquired of Tancred.

"Not yet."

"You have seen Beiroot?"

"I have."

"Antakia is not near as great a place as Beiroot," said the Queen, "yet once Antakia was much larger than Stamboul; as large perhaps as your great city."

"And far more beautiful than either," said Tancred.

"Ah! you have heard of these things!" exclaimed the Queen, with great animation. "Now tell me — why is Antakia no longer a great city, as great as Stamboul and the city of the English, and far more beautiful?"

"It is a question that might perplex the wise," said Tancred.

"I am not wise," said the Queen, looking earnestly at Tancred, "yet I could solve it."

"Would that your majesty would deign to do so."

"There are things to be said, and there are things not to be said," was the reply, and the Queen looked at Keferinis.

"Her majesty has expressed herself with infinite exactitude and with condescending propriety," said the chief minister.

The Queen was silent for a moment, thoughtful, and then waved gracefully her hands; whereupon the chamber was immediately cleared. The princes, instructed by Keferinis, alone remained, with the exception of the minister, who, at the desire of his Sovereign, now seated himself, but not on the divan. He sate opposite to the Queen, on the floor.

"Princes," said the Queen, "you are welcome to Gindaries, where nobody ever comes. For we are people who wish neither to see nor to be seen. We are not like other people, nor do we envy other people. I wish not for the ships of the Queen of the English, and my subjects are content to live as their fathers lived before them. Our mountains are wild and barren; our vales require for their cultivation unceasing toil. We have no gold or silver, no jewels; neither have we silk. But we have some beautiful and consoling thoughts, and more than thoughts, which are shared by all of us and open to all of us, and which only we can value or comprehend. When Darkûsh, who dwells at Damascus, and was the servant of my father, sent to us the ever-faithful messenger, and said that there were princes who wished to confer with us, he knew well it was vain to send here men who would talk of the English and the Egyptians, of the Porte and of the nations of

Franguestan. These things to us are like the rind of fruit. Neither do we care for cottons, nor for things which are sought for in the cities of the plains, and it may be, noble Emir, cherished also in the mountains of Lebanon. This is not Lebanon, but the mountains of the Ansarey, who are as they have ever been, before the name of Turk or English was known in Syria, and who will remain as they are, unless that happens which may never happen, but which is too beautiful not to believe may arrive. Therefore I speak to you with frankness, princes, of strange countries: Darkush, the servant of my father, and also mine, told me, by the ever-faithful messenger, that it was not of these things, which are to us like water spilt on sand, that you wished to confer, but that there were things to be said which ought to be uttered. Therefore it is, I sent back the faithful messenger, saying, Send then these princes to Gindarics, since their talk is not of things which come and go, making a noise on the coast and in the cities of the plains, and then passing away. These we infinitely despise; but the words of truth uttered in the spirit of friendship will last, if they be grave, and on matters which authorize journeys made by princes to visit queens."

Her Majesty ceased, and looked at Keferinis, who bowed profound approbation. Tancred and Fakredeen also exchanged glances, but the Emir waved his hand, signifying his wish that Tancred should reply, who, after a moment's hesitation, with an air of great deference, thus ventured to express himself.

"It seems to me and to my friend, the Prince of the Le-

banon, that we have listened to the words of wisdom. They are in every respect just. We know not, ourselves, Darkush, but he was rightly informed when he apprised your Majesty that it was not upon ordinary topics, either political or commercial, that we desired to visit Gindarics. Nor was it out of such curiosity as animates travellers. For we are not travellers, but men who have a purpose which we wish to execute. The world, that, since its creation, has owned the spiritual supremacy of Asia, which is but natural, since Asia is the only portion of the world which the Creator of that world has deigned to visit, and in which he has ever conferred with man, is unhappily losing its faith in those ideas and convictions that hitherto have governed the human race. We think, therefore, the time has arrived when Asia should make one of its periodical and appointed efforts to reassert that supremacy. But though we are acting, as we believe, under a divine impulse, it is our duty to select the most fitting human agents to accomplish a celestial mission. We have thought therefore hat it should devolve on Syria and Arabia, countries in which our God has even dwelt, and with which he has been from the earliest days in direct and regular communication, to undertake the solemn task. Two races of men alike free, one inhabiting the desert, the other the mountains, untainted by any of the vices of the plains, and the virgin vigour of their intelligence not dwarfed by the conventional superstitions of towns and cities — one prepared at once to supply an *unrivalled cavalry*, the other an army ready equipped of intrepid

foot-soldiers, appear to us to be indicated as the natural and united conquerors of the world. We wish to conquer that world, with angels at our head, in order that we may establish the happiness of man by a divine dominion, and, crushing the political atheism that is now desolating existence, utterly extinguish the grovelling tyranny of self government."

The Queen of the Ansarey listened with deep and agitated attention to Tancred. When he had concluded, she said, after a moment's pause, "I believe also in the necessity of the spiritual supremacy of our Asia. And since it has ceased, it seems not to me that man and man's life have been either as great or as beautiful as heretofore. What you have said assures me, that it is well that you have come hither. But when you speak of Arabia, of what God is it you speak?"

"I speak of the only God, the Creator of all things, the God who spoke on the Arabian Mount Sinai, and expiated our sins upon the Syrian Mount Calvary."

"There is also Mount Olympus," said the Queen, "which is in Anatolia. Once the gods dwelt there."

"The gods of poets," said Tancred.

"No; the gods of the people; who loved the people, and whom the people loved."

There was a pause, broken by the Queen, who, looking at her minister, said, "Noble Keferinis, the thoughts of these princes are divine, and in every respect becoming cetestial things. Is it not well that the gates of the beautiful and the sacred should be closed?"

"In every sense, irresistible Queen, it is well that the gates of the beautiful and the sacred should not be closed."

"Then let them bring garlands. Princes," the Queen continued, "what the eye of no stranger has looked upon, you shall now behold. This also is Asian and divine."

Immediately the chamber again filled. The Queen, looking at the two princes and bowing, rose from her seat. They instantly followed her example. One came forward, offering to the Queen, and then to each of them, a garland. Garlands were also taken by Keferinis and a few others. Cypros and her companions walked first, then Keferinis and one who had stood near the royal divan; the queen, between her two guests, followed, and after her a small and ordered band.

They stopped before a lofty portal of bronze, evidently of ancient art. This opened into a covered and excavated way, in some respects similar to that which had led them directly to the castle of Gindarics; but, although obscure, not requiring artificial light, yet it was of no inconsiderable length. It emerged upon a platform cut out of the natural rock; on all sides were steep cliffs, above them the bright blue sky. The ravine appeared to be closed on every side.

The opposite cliff, at the distance of several hundred yards, reached by a winding path, presented, at first, the appearance of the front of an ancient temple; and Tancred, as he approached it, perceived that the hand of art had assisted the development of an intimation of nature: a pediment, *a deep portico,* supported by Ionic columns, and a flight of

steps, were carved out of the cliff, and led into vast caverns, which art also had converted into lofty and magnificent chambers. When they had mounted the steps, the queen and her companions lifted their garlands to the skies, and joined in a chorus, solemn and melodious, but which did not sound as the language of Syria. Passing through the portico, Tancred found himself apparently in a vast apartment, where he beheld a strange spectacle.

At the first glance it seemed that, ranged on blocks of the surrounding mountains, were a variety of sculptured figures of costly materials and exquisite beauty; forms of heroic majesty and ideal grace; and, themselves serene and unimpassioned, filling the minds of the beholders with awe and veneration. It was not until his eye was accustomed to the atmosphere, and his mind had in some degree recovered from the first strange surprise, that Tancred gradually recognised the fair and famous images over which his youth had so long and so early pondered. Stole over his spirit the countenance august, with the flowing beard and the lordly locks, sublime on his ivory throne, in one hand the ready thunderbolt, in the other the cypress sceptre; at his feet the watchful eagle with expanded wings; — stole over the spirit of the gazing pilgrim, each shape of that refined and elegant hierarchy made for the worship of clear skies and sunny lands; goddess and god, genius, and nymph, and faun, — all that the wit and heart of man can devise and create, to represent his genius and his passion — all that the

myriad developments of a beautiful nature can require for their personification. A beautiful and sometimes flickering light played over the sacred groups and figures, softening the ravages of time, and occasionally investing them with, as it were, a celestial movement.

"The gods of the Greeks!" exclaimed Tancred.

"The gods of the Ansarey," said the queen; "the gods of my fathers!"

"I am filled with a sweet amazement," murmured Tancred. "Life is stranger than I deemed. My soul is, as it were, unsphered."

"Yet you know them to be gods," said the queen; "and the Emir of the Lebanon does not know them to be gods?"

"I feel that they are such," said Fakredeen.

"How is this, then?" said the queen. "How is it that you, the child of a northern isle —"

"Should recognise the Olympian Jove," said Tancred. "It seems strange; but from my earliest youth I learnt these things."

"Ah, then," murmured the queen to herself, and with an expression of the greatest satisfaction, "Darkush was rightly informed; he is one of us."

"I behold then, at last, the gods of the Ansarey," said Fakredeen.

"All that remains of Antioch, noble Emir; of Antioch the superb, with its hundred towers, and its sacred groves *and fanes of flashing* beauty."

"Unhappy Asia!" exclaimed the Emir; "thou hast indeed fallen!"

"When all was over," said the queen; "when the people refused to sacrifice, and the the gods, indignant, quitted earth — I hope not for ever — the faithful few fled to these mountains with the sacred images, and we have cherished them. I told you we had beautiful and consoling thoughts, and more than thoughts. All else is lost — our wealth, our arts, our luxury, our invention — all have vanished. The niggard earth scarcely yields us a subsistence; we dress like Kurds — feed hardly as well; but if we were to quit these mountains, and wander like them on the plains with our ample flocks, we should lose our sacred images — all the traditions that we yet cherish in our souls, that in spite of our hard lives preserve us from being barbarians — a sense of the beautiful and the lofty, and the divine hope, that, when the rapidly consummating degradation of Asia has been fulfilled, mankind will return again to those gods who made the earth beautiful and happy; and that they, in their celestial mercy, may revisit that world which, without them, has become a howling wilderness."

"Lady," said Tancred, with much emotion, "we must, with your permission, speak of these things. My heart is at present too full."

"Come hither," said the queen, in a voice of great softness; and she led Tancred away.

They entered a chamber of much smaller dimensions, which might be looked upon as a chapel annexed to the cathedral or Pantheon which they had quitted. At each end of it was a statue. They paused before one. It was not larger than life, of ivory and gold; the colour purer than could possibly have been imagined, highly polished, and so little injured, that at a distance the general effect was not in the least impaired.

"Do you know that?" asked the Queen, and she looked at the statue, and then she looked at Tancred.

"I recognise the god of poetry and light," and Tancred; "Phœbus Apollo."

"Our god: the god of Antioch, the god of the sacred grove! Who could look upon him, and doubt his deity!"

"Is this indeed the figure," murmured Tancred; "before which a hundred steers have bled? before which libations of honeyed wine were poured from golden goblets? that lived in a heaven of incense!"

"Ah! you know all."

"Angels watch over us!" said Tancred, "or my brain will turn. And who is this?"

"One before whom the pilgrims of the world once kneeled. This is the Syrian goddess; the Venus of our land, but called among us by a name which, by her favour, I also bear — Astarte."

CHAPTER IV.

"And when did men cease from worshipping them?" asked Fakredeen of Tancred; "before the Prophet?"

"When truth descended from Heaven in the person of Christ Jesus."

"But truth had descended from Heaven before Jesus," replied Fakredeen; "since, as you tell me, God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, and since then to many of the prophets and the princes of Israel."

"Of whom Jesus was one," said Tancred; "the descendant of King David as well as the son of God. But through this last and greatest of their princes it was ordained that the inspired Hebrew mind should mould and govern the world. Through Jesus, God spoke to the Gentiles, and not to the tribes of Israel only. That is the great worldly difference between Jesus and his inspired predecessors. Christianity is Judaism for the multitude, but still it is Judaism, and its development was the death-blow of the Pagan idolatry."

"Gentiles," murmured Fakredeen; "Gentiles! — you are a Gentile, Tancred?"

"Alas! I am," he answered, "sprung from a horde of Baltic pirates, who never were heard of during the greater annals of the world — a descent which I have been educated to believe was the greatest of honours. What we should have

become, had not the Syro-Arabian creeds formed our minds, I dare not contemplate. Probably we should have perished in mutual destruction. However, though rude and modern Gentiles, unknown to the Apostles, we also were in time touched with the sacred symbol, and originally endowed with an organization of a high class, for our ancestors wandered from Caucasus, we have become kings and princes."

"What a droll thing is history," said Fakredeen. "Ah! if I were only acquainted with it, my education would be complete. Should you call me a Gentile?"

"I have great doubts whether such an appellation could be extended to the descendants of Ishmael. I always look upon you as a member of the sacred race. It is a great thing for any man: for you it may tend to empire."

"Was Julius Cæsar a Gentile?"

"Unquestionably?"

"And Iskander?" (Alexander of Macedon.)

"No doubt; the two most illustrious Gentiles that ever existed, and representing the two great races on the shores of the Mediterranean, to which the apostolic views were first directed."

"Well, their blood, though Gentile, led to empire," said Fakredeen.

"But what are their conquests to those of Jesus Christ," said Tancred, with great animation. "Where are their dynasties? — where their subjects? They were both deified: *who burns incense to* them now? Their descendants, both

Greek and Roman, bow before the altars of the house of David. The house of David is worshipped at Rome itself — at every seat of great and growing empire in the world — at London, at St. Petersburg, at New York. Asia alone is faithless to the Asian; but Asia has been overrun by Turks and Tatars. For nearly five hundred years, the true oriental mind has been enthralled. Arabia alone has remained free and faithful to the divine tradition. From its bosom we shall go forth and sweep away the mouldering remnants of the Tataric system; and then, when the East has resumed its indigenous intelligence, when angels and prophets again mingle with humanity, the sacred quarter of the globe will recover its primeval and divine supremacy; it will act upon the modern empires, and the fainthearted faith of Europe, which is but the shadow of a shade, will become as vigorous as befits men who are in sustained communication with the Creator."

"But suppose," said Fakredeen, in a captious tone that was unusual with him, "suppose when the Tataric system is swept away, Asia reverts to those beautiful divinities that we beheld this morning?"

More than once, since they quitted the presence of Astarte, had Fakredeen harped upon this idea. From that interview the companions had returned moody and unusually silent. Strange to say, there seemed a tacit understanding between them to converse little on that subject which mainly engrossed their minds. Their mutual remarks on Astarte were few and constrained; a little more diffuse upon the visit to the temple, but

they chiefly kept up the conventional chat of companionship by rather commonplace observations on Keferinis and other incidents and persons comparatively of little interest and importance.

After their audience, they dined with the minister, not exactly in the manner of Downing Street, nor even with the comparative luxury of Canobia, but the meal was an incident and therefore agreeable. A good pilaff was more acceptable than some partridges dressed with oil and honey, but all Easterns are temperate, and travel teaches abstinence to the Franks. Neither Fakredeen nor Tancred were men who criticised a meal: bread, rice, and coffee, a bird or a fish, easily satisfied them. The Emir affected the Moslem when the minister offered him the wine of the mountains, which was harsh and rough after the delicious Vino d'Oro of Lebanon; but Tancred contrived to drink the health of Queen Astarte without any wry expression of countenance.

"I believe," said Keferinis, "that the English in their island of London, drink only to women; the other natives of Franguestan chiefly pledge men; we look upon both as barbarous."

"At any rate, you worship the god of wine," remarked Tancred, who never attempted to correct the self-complacent minister. "I observed to-day the statue of Bacchus."

"Bacchus!" said Keferinis, with a smile, half of inquiry, half of commiseration. "Bacchus—an English name, I apprehend! All our gods came from the ancient Antakia before

either the Turks or the English were heard of. Their real names are in every respect sacred, nor will they be uttered, even to the Ansarey, until after the divine initiation has been performed in the perfectly admirable and inexpressibly delightful mysteries," which meant, in simpler tongue, that Keferinis was entirely ignorant of the subject on which he was talking.

After their meal, Keferinis, proposing that in the course of the day they should fly one of the Queen's hawks, left them, when the conversation, of which we have given a snatch, occurred. Yet, as we have observed, they were on the whole moody and unusually silent. Fakredeen in particular was wrapped in reverie, and when he spoke, it was always in reference to the singular spectacle of the morning. His musing forced him to inquiry, having never before heard of the Olympian hierarchy, nor of the woods of Daphne, nor of the bright lord of the silver bow.

Why were they moody and silent?

With regard to Lord Montacute, the events of the morning might sufficiently account for the gravity of his demeanour, for he was naturally of a thoughtful and brooding temperament. This unexpected introduction to Olympus was suggestive of many reflections to one so habituated to muse over divine influences. Nor need it be denied that the character of the Queen greatly interested him. Her mind was already attuned to heavenly thoughts. She already believed that she was fulfilling a sacred mission. Tancred could not be blind

to the importance of such a personage as Astarte in the great drama of divine regeneration, which was constantly present to his consideration. Her conversion might be as weighty as ten victories. He was not insensible to the efficacy of feminine influence in the dissemination of religious truth, nor unaware how much the greatest development of the Arabian creeds, in which the Almighty himself deigned to become a personal actor, was assisted by the sacred spell of woman. It is not the Empress Helen alone who has rivalled, or rather surpassed, the exploits of the most illustrious apostles. The three great empires of the age — France, England, and Russia — are indebted for their Christianity to female lips. We all remember the salutary influence of Clotilde and Bertha which bore the traditions of the Jordan to the Seine and the Thames: it should not be forgotten that to the fortunate alliance of Waldimir, the Duke of Moscovy, with the sister of the Greek Emperor Basil, is to be ascribed the remarkable circumstance, that the intellectual development of all the Russias has been conducted on Arabian principles. It was the fair Giselle, worthy successor of the soft-hearted women of Galilee, herself the sister of the Emperor Henry the Second, who opened the mind of her husband, the King of Hungary, to the deep wisdom of the Hebrews, to the laws of Moses and the precepts of Jesus. Poland also found an apostle and a queen in the sister of the Duke of Bohemia, and who revealed to the Sarmatian Micislas the ennobling *mysteries of Sinai* and of Calvary.

Sons of Israel, when you recollect that you created Christendom, you may pardon the Christians even their Autos da Fè!

Fakredeen Shehaab, Emir of Canobia, and lineal descendant of the standard-bearer of the Prophet, had not such faith in Arabian principles, as to dream of converting the Queen of the Ansarey. Quite the reverse; the Queen of the Ansarey had converted him. From the first moment he beheld Astarte, she had exercised over him that magnetic influence of which he was peculiarly susceptible, and by which Tancred at once attracted and controlled him. But Astarte added to this influence a power to which the Easterns in general do not very easily bow, the influence of sex. With the exception of Eva, woman had never guided the spirit or moulded the career of Fakredeen; and, in her instance, the sovereignty had been somewhat impaired by that acquaintance of the cradle, which has a tendency to enfeeble the ideal, though it may strengthen the affections. But Astarte rose upon him commanding and complete, a star whose gradual formation he had not watched, and whose unexpected brilliancy might therefore be more striking even than the superior splendour which he had habitually contemplated. Young, beautiful, queenly, impassioned, and eloquent, surrounded by the accessories that influence the imagination, and invested with fascinating mystery, Fakredeen, silent and enchanted, had yielded his spirit to Astarte, even before she

revealed to his unaccustomed and astonished mind the god-like forms of her antique theogony.

Eva and Tancred had talked to him of gods: Astarte had shown them to him. All visible images of their boasted divinities of Sinai and of Calvary with which he was acquainted were enshrined over the altars of the convents of Lebanon. He contrasted those representations without beauty or grace, so mean and mournful and spiritless, or if endued with attributes of power, more menacing than majestic, and morose rather than sublime — with those shapes of symmetry, those visages of immortal beauty, serene yet full of sentiment, on which he had gazed that morning with a holy rapture. The Queen had said that, besides Mount Sinai and Mount Calvary, there was also Mount Olympus. It was true; even Tancred had not challenged her assertion. And the legends of Olympus were as old as — nay, older than — those of the convent or the mosques.

This was no mythic fantasy of the beautiful Astarte; the fond tradition of a family, a race, even a nation. These were not the gods merely of the mountains: they had been, as they deserved to be, the gods of a great world, of great nations and of great men. They were the gods of Alexander and of Caius Julius; they were the gods under whose divine administration Asia had been powerful, rich, luxurious, and happy. They were the gods who had covered the coasts and plains with magnificent cities, crowded the midland ocean with *golden galleys, and* filled the provinces that were now a chain

of wilderness and desert with teeming and thriving millions. No wonder the Ansarey were faithful to such deities. The marvel was why men should ever have deserted them. But man had deserted them, and man was unhappy. All — Eva, Tancred, his own consciousness, the surrounding spectacles of his life, assured him that man was unhappy; degraded, or discontented; at all events miserable. He was not surprised that a Syrian should be unhappy, even a Syrian prince, for he had no career; he was not surprised that the Jews were unhappy, because they were the most persecuted of the human race, and in all probability very justly so, for such an exception as Eva proved nothing; but here was an Englishman, young, noble, very rich, with every advantage of nature and fortune, and he had come out to Syria to tell them that all Europe was as miserable as themselves. What if their misery had been caused by their deserting those divinities who had once made them so happy?

A great question; Fakredeen indulged in endless combinations while he smoked countless nargillies. If religion were to cure the world, suppose they tried this ancient and once popular faith, so very popular in Syria. The Queen of the Ansarey could command five and twenty thousand approved warriors, and the Emir of the Lebanon could summon a host, if not as disciplined, far more numerous. Fakredeen, in a frenzy of reverie, became each moment more practical. Asian supremacy, cosmopolitan regeneration, and theocratic equality, all gradually disappeared. An independent

Syrian kingdom, framed and guarded by a hundred thousand sabres, rose up before him; an established Olympian religion, which the Druses, at his instigation, would embrace, and toleration for the Maronites till he could bribe Bishop Nicodemus to arrange a general conformity and convert his great principal from the Patriarch into the Pontiff of Antioch. The Jews might remain, provided they negotiated a loan which should consolidate the Olympian institutions and establish the gentile dynasty of Fakredeen and Astarte.

CHAPTER V.

When Fakredeen bade Tancred as usual good night, his voice was different from its accustomed tones; he had replied to Tancred with asperity several times during the evening; and when he was separated from his companion, he felt relieved. All unconscious of these changes and symptoms, was the heir of Bellamont. Though grave, one indeed who never laughed and seldom smiled, Tancred was blessed with the rarest of all virtues, a singularly sweet temper. He was grave, because he was always thinking, and thinking of great deeds. But his heart was soft, and his nature most kind, and remarkably regardful of the feelings of others. To wound them, however unintentionally, would occasion him painful disturbance. Though naturally rapid in the perception of character, his inexperience of life and the self-examination in which he was so frequently absorbed, tended to blunt a little his observation of others. With a generous failing, which is not uncommon, he was prepared to give those whom he loved credit for the virtues which he himself possessed, and the sentiments which he himself extended to them. Being profound, stedfast, and most loyal in his feelings, he was incapable of suspecting that his elected friend could entertain sentiments towards him less deep, less earnest, and less faithful. The change in the demeanour of the Emir was,

therefore, unnoticed by him. And what might be called the sullen irritability of Fakredeen was encountered with the usual gentleness and total disregard of self which always distinguished the behaviour of Lord Montacute.

The 'next' morning, they were invited by Astarte to a hawking party, and, leaving the rugged ravines, they descended into a softer and more cultivated country, where they found good sport. Fakredeen was an accomplished falconer, and loved to display his skill before the queen. Tancred was quite unpractised, but Astarte seemed resolved that he should become experienced in the craft among her mountains, which did not please the Emir, as he caracoled in sumptuous dress on a splendid steed, with the superb falcon resting on his wrist.

The princes dined again with Keferinis; that, indeed, was to be their custom during their stay; afterwards, accompanied by the minister, they repaired to the royal divan where they had received a general invitation. Here they found Astarte alone, with the exception of Cypros and her companions, who worked with their spindles apart, 'and here, on the pretext of discussing the high topics on which they had repaired to Gindarics, there was much conversation on many subjects. Thus passed one, two, and even three days; thus, in general, would their hours be occupied at Gindarics. In the morning the hawks, or a visit to some green valley, which was blessed with a stream and beds of *oleander, and* groves of acacia or sycamore. Fakredeen had

no cause to complain of the demeanour of Astarte towards him, for it was most gracious and encouraging. Indeed, he pleased her; and she was taken, as many had been, by the ingenuous modesty, the unaffected humility, the tender and touching deference of his manner; he seemed to watch her every glance, and hang upon her every accent: his sympathy with her was perfect; he agreed with every sentiment and observation that escaped her. Blushing, boyish, unsophisticated, yet full of native grace, and evidently gifted with the most amiable disposition, it was impossible not to view with interest, and even regard, one so young and so innocent.

But while the Emir had no cause to be dissatisfied with the demeanour of Astarte to himself, he could not be unaware that her carriage to Tancred was different, and he doubted whether the difference was in his favour. He hung on the accents of Astarte, but he remarked that the Queen hung upon the accents of Tancred, who, engrossed with great ideas and full of a great purpose, was unconscious of what did not escape the lynx-like glance of his companion. However, Fakredeen was not, under any circumstances, easily disheartened; in the present case, there were many circumstances to encourage him. This was a great situation; there was room for combinations. He felt that he was not unfavoured by Astarte; he had confidence, and a just confidence, in his power of fascination. He had to combat a rival, who was, perhaps, not thinking of conquest; at any

rate, who was unconscious of success. Even had he the advantage, which Fakredeen was not now disposed to admit, he might surely be baffled by a competitor with a purpose, devoting his whole intelligence to his object, and hesitating at no means to accomplish it.

Fakredeen became great friends with Keferinis. He gave up his time and attentions much to that great personage; anointed him with the most delicious flattery, most dexterously applied; consulted him on great affairs which had no existence; took his advice on conjunctures which never could occur; assured Keferinis that, in his youth, the Emir Besheer had impressed on him the importance of cultivating the friendly feelings, and obtaining the support of the distinguished minister of the Ansarey; gave him some jewels, and made him enormous promises.

On the fourth day of the visit, Fakredeen found himself alone with Astarte, at least, without the presence of Tancred, whom Keferinis had detained in his progress to the royal apartment. The young Emir had pushed on, and gained an opportunity which he had long desired.

They were speaking of the Lebanon; Fakredeen had been giving Astarte, at her request, a sketch of Canobia, and intimating his inexpressible gratification, were she to honour his castle with a visit; when, somewhat abruptly, in a suppressed voice, and in a manner not wholly free from embarrassment, Astarte said, "What ever surprises me is, that *Darkush*, who is my servant at Damascus, should have com-

municated, by the faithful messenger, that one of the princes seeking to visit Gindarics was of our beautiful and ancient faith; for the Prince of England has assured me, that nothing was more unfounded or indeed impossible; that the faith, ancient and beautiful, never prevailed in the land of his fathers; and that the reason why he was acquainted with the godlike forms is, that in his country it is the custom — custom to me most singular, and indeed incomprehensible—to educate the youth by teaching them the ancient poems of the Greeks — poems quite lost to us, but in which are embalmed the sacred legends."

"We ought never to be surprised at anything that is done by the English," observed Fakredeen; "who are, after all, in a certain sense, savages. Their country produces nothing; it is an island, a mere rock, larger than Malta, but not so well fortified. Everything they require is imported from other countries; they get their corn from Odessa, and their wine from the ports of Spain. I have been assured at Beiroot that they do not grow even their own cotton, but that I can hardly believe. Even their religion is an exotic; and, as they are indebted for that to Syria, it is not surprising that they should import their education from Greece."

"Poor people!" exclaimed the queen; "and yet they travel — they wish to improve themselves?"

"Darkush, however," continued Fakredeen, without noticing the last observation of Astarte, "was not wrongly informed."

"Not wrongly informed?"

"No: one of the princes who wished to visit Gindarics was, in a certain sense, of the ancient and beautiful faith, but it was not the prince of the English."

"What are these pigeons that you are flying without letters!" exclaimed Astarte, looking very perplexed.

"Ah! beautiful Astarte," said Fakredeen with a sigh; "you did not know my mother."

"How should I know your mother, Emir of the castles of Lebanon? Have I ever left these mountains, which are dearer to me than the pyramids of Egypt to the great Pacha? Have I ever looked upon your women, Maronite or Druse, walking in white sheets, as if they were the children of ten thousand Ghouls, with horns on their heads, as if they were the wild horses of the desert?"

"Ask Keferinis," said Fakredeen, still sighing; "he has been at Bteddeen, the court of the Emir Besheer. He knew my mother, at least by memory. My mother, beautiful Astarte, was an Ansarey."

"Your mother was an Ansarey!" repeated Astarte, in a tone of infinite surprise; "your mother an Ansarey! Of what family was she a child?"

"Ah!" replied Fakredeen, "there it is; that is the secret sorrow of my life. A mystery hangs over my mother, for I lost both my parents in extreme childhood; I was at her heart," he added, in a broken voice, "and amid outrage, *tumult, and war.* Of whom was my mother the child? I am

here to discover that, if possible. Her race and her beautiful religion have been the dream of my life. All I have prayed for has been to recognise her kindred and to behold her gods."

"It is very interesting," murmured the Queen.

"It is more than interesting," sighed Fakredeen, "Ah! beautiful Astarte! if you knew all — if you could form even the most remote idea of what I have suffered for this unknown faith;" and a passionate tear quivered on the radiant cheek of the young prince.

"And yet you came here to preach the doctrines of another," said Astarte.

"I came here to preach the doctrines of another!" replied Fakredeen, with an expression of contempt; his nostril dilated, his lip curled with scorn.

"This mad Englishman came here to preach the doctrines of another creed, and one with which, it seems to me, he has as little connexion as his frigid soil has with palm trees. They produce them, I am told, in houses of glass, and they force their foreign faith in the same manner; but, though they have temples and churches and mosques, they confess they have no miracles; they admit that they never produced a prophet; they own that no God ever spoke to their people, or visited their land; and yet this race, so peculiarly favoured by celestial communication, aspire to be missionaries!"

"I have much misapprehended you," said Astarte; "I thought you were both embarked in a great cause."

"Ah, you learnt that from Darkush!" quickly replied Fakredeen. "You see, beautiful Astarte, that I have no personal acquaintance with Darkush. It was the intendant of my companion, who was his friend; and it is through him that Darkush has learnt anything that he has communicated. The mission, the project was not mine; but, when I found my comrade had the means, which had hitherto evaded me, of reaching Gindarics, I threw no obstacles in his crotchety course. On the contrary, I embraced the opportunity even with fervour, and, far from discouraging my friend, from views to which I know he is fatally, even ridiculously wedded, I looked forward to this expedition as the possible means of diverting his mind from some opinions, and, I might add, some influences, which I am persuaded can eventually entail upon him nothing but disappointment and disgrace." And here Fakredeen shook his head, with that air of confidential mystery which so cleverly piques curiosity.

"Whatever may be his fate," said Astarte, in a tone of great seriousness, "the English prince does not seem to me to be a person who could ever experience disgrace."

"No, no," quickly replied his faithful friend; "of course I did not speak of personal dishonour. He is extremely proud and rash, and not in any way a practical man; but he is not a person who ever would do anything to be sent to the bagnio or the galleys. What I mean by disgrace is, that he is mixed up with transactions, and connected with persons who will *damage, cheapen,* in a worldly sense dishonour him, destroy

all his sources of power and influence. For instance now, in his country, in England, a Jew is never permitted to enter England; they may settle in Gibraltar — but in England, no. Well, it is perfectly well known among all those who care about these affairs, that this enterprise of his — this religious-politico-military adventure, is merely undertaken because he happens to be desparately enamoured of a Jewess at Damascus, whom he cannot carry home as his bride."

"Enamoured of a Jewess at Damascus!" said Astarte, turning very pale.

"To folly — to frenzy; she is at the bottom of the whole of this affair; she talks Cabala to him, and he Nazareny to her; and so, between them, they have invented this grand scheme — the conquest of Asia — perhaps the world, with our Syrian sabres, and we are to be rewarded for our pains by eating passover cakes."

"What are they?"

"Festival bread of the Hebrews, made in the new moon, with the milk of he-goats."

"What horrors!"

"What a reward for conquest!"

"Will the Queen of the English let one of her princes marry a Jewess?"

"Never; he will be beheaded, and she will be burnt alive, eventually; but in the mean time a great deal of mischief may occur, unless we stop it."

"It certainly should be stopped."

"What amuses me most in this affair," continued Fakredeen, "is the cool way in which this Englishman comes to us for our assistance. First, he is at Canobia — then at Gindarics; we are to do the business, and Syria is spoken of as if it were nothing. Now the fact is, Syria is the only practical feature of the case. There is no doubt that, if we were all agreed, if Lebanon and the Ansarey were to unite, we could clear Syria of the Turks, conquer the plain, and carry the whole coast in a campaign, and no one would ever interfere to disturb us. Why should they? The Turks could not, and the natives of Franguestan would not. Leave me to manage them. There is nothing in the world I so revel in as hocussing Guizot and Aberdeen. You never heard of Guizot and Aberdeen? They are the two Reis Effendis of the King of the French and the Queen of the English. I sent them an archbishop last year, one of my fellows, Archbishop Murad, who led them a pretty dance. They nearly made me King of the Lebanon, to put an end to disturbances which never existed except in the venerable Murad's representations."

"These are strange things! Has she charms, this Jewess? Very beautiful, I suppose?"

"The Englishman vows so; he is always raving of her; talks of her in his sleep."

"As you say, it would indeed be strange to draw our sabres for a Jewess. Is she dark or fair?"

"*I think*, when he writes verses to her, he always calls

her a moon or a star; that smacks nocturnal and somewhat sombre."

"I detest the Jews; but I have heard their women are beautiful."

"We will banish them all from our kingdom of Syria," said Fakredeen, looking at Astarte earnestly.

"Why, if we are to make a struggle, it should be for something. There have been Syrian kingdoms."

"And shall be, beauteous Queen, and you shall rule them. I believe now the dream of my life will be realized."

"Why, what 's that?"

"My mother's last aspiration — the dying legacy of her passionate soul, known only to me, and never breathed to human being until this moment."

"Then you recollect your mother?"

"It was my nurse, long since dead, who was the depositary of the injunction, and in due time conveyed it to me."

"And what was it?"

"To raise, at Deir el Kamar, the capital of our district, a marble temple to the Syrian goddess."

"Beautiful idea!"

"It would have drawn back the Mountain to the ancient faith: the Druses are half prepared and wait only my word."

"But the Nazareny bishops," said the Queen, "whom you find so useful, what will they say?"

"What did the priests and priestesses of the Syrian goddess say, when Syria became Christian? They turned into bishops and nuns. Let them turn back again."

CHAPTER VI.

TANCRED and Fakredeen had been absent from Gindarics for two or three days, making an excursion in the neighbouring districts, and visiting several of those chieftains whose future aid might be of so much importance to them. Away from the unconscious centre of so many passions and intrigues, excited by the novelty of their life, sanguine of the ultimate triumph of his manœuvres, and at times still influenced by his companion, the demeanour of the young Emir of Lebanon to his friend resumed something of its wonted softness, confidence, and complaisance. They were once more in sight of the wild palace-fort of Astarte; spurring their horses, they dashed before their attendants over the plain, and halted at the huge portal of iron, while the torches were lit, and preparations were made for the passage of the covered way.

When they entered the principal court, there were unusual appearances of some recent and considerable occurrence: groups of Turkish soldiers, disarmed, reclining camels, baggage and steeds, and many of the armed tribes of the Mountain.

"What is all this?" inquired Fakredeen.

"'T is the hareem of the Pacha of Aleppo," replied a

warrior, "captured on the plain, and carried up into the mountains to our Queen of queens."

"The war begins," said Fakredeen looking round at Tancred, with a glittering eye.

"Women make war on women," he replied.

"'T is the first step," said the Emir, dismounting; "I care not how it comes. Women are at the bottom of everything. If it had not been for the Sultana Mother, I should have now been Prince of the Mountain."

When they had regained their apartments the lordly Keferinis soon appeared, to offer them his congratulations on their return. The Minister was peculiarly refined and mysterious this morning, especially with respect to the great event, which he involved in so much obscurity, that, after much conversation, the travellers were as little acquainted with the occurrence as when they entered the court-yard of Gindarics.

"The capture of a Pacha's hareem is not water spilt on sand, lordly Keferinis," said the Emir. "We shall hear more of this."

"What we shall hear," replied Keferinis, "is entirely an affair of the future; nor is it in any way to be disputed, that there are few men who do not find it more difficult to foretel what is to happen than to remember what has taken place."

"We sometimes find that memory is as rare a quality as prediction," said Tancred.

"In England," replied the lordly Keferinis; "but it is *never to be forgotten*, and, indeed, on the contrary, should

be entirely recollected, that the English, being a new people, have nothing indeed which they can remember."

Tancred bowed.

"And how is the most gracious lady, Queen of queens?" inquired Fakredeen.

"The most gracious lady, Queen of queens," replied Keferinis, very mysteriously, "has at this time many thoughts."

"If she require any aid," said Fakredeen, "there is not a musket in Lebanon that is not at her service."

Keferinis bent his head, and said, "It is not in any way to be disputed that there are subjects which require for their management the application of a certain degree of force, and the noble Emir of the Lebanon has expressed himself in that sense with the most exact propriety; there are also subjects which are regulated by the application of a certain number of words, provided they are well chosen, and distinguished by an inestimable exactitude. It does not by any means follow that from what has occurred there will be sanguinary encounters between the people of the gracious lady, Queen of queens, and those that dwell in plains and cities; nor can it be denied that war is a means by which many things are brought to a final conjuncture. At the same time, courtesy has many charms, even for the Turks, though it is not to be denied, or in any way concealed, that a Turk, especially if he be a Pacha, is, of all obscene and utter children of the devil, the most entirely contemptible and thoroughly to be execrated."

"If I were the Queen, I would not give up the hareem," said Fakredeen; "and I would bring affairs to a crisis. The garrison at Aleppo is not strong; they have been obliged to march six regiments to Deir el Kamar, and, though affairs are comparatively tranquil in Lebanon for the moment, let me send a pigeon to my cousin Francis El Kazin, and Young Syria will get up such a stir that old Wageah Pacha will not spare a single man. I will have fifty bonfires on the Mountain near Beiroot in one night, and Colonel Rose will send off a steamer to Sir Canning to tell him there is a revolt in the Lebanon, with a double despatch for Aberdeen, full of smoking villages and slaughtered women!" and the young Emir inhaled his nargilly with additional zest as he recollected the triumphs of his past mystifications.

At sunset it was announced to the travellers that the Queen would receive them. Astarte appeared much gratified by their return, was very gracious, although in a different way, to both of them, inquired much as to what they had seen and what they had done, with whom they had conversed, and what had been said. At length, she observed, "Something has also happened at Gindarics in your absence, noble princes. Last night, they brought part of the hareem of the Pacha of Aleppo captive hither. This may lead to events."

"I have already ventured to observe to the lordly Keferinis," said Fakredeen, "that every lance in the Lebanon is at your command, gracious Queen."

"*We have lances*," said Astarte; "it is not of that I was

thinking. Nor indeed do I care to prolong a quarrel for this capture. If the Pacha will renounce the tribute of the villages, I am for peace; if he will not, we will speak of those things, of which there has been counsel between us. I do not wish this affair of the hareem to be mixed up with what has preceded it. My principal captive is a most beautiful woman, and one, too, that greatly interests and charms me. She is not a Turk, but, I apprehend, a Christian lady of the cities. She is plunged in grief, and weeps sometimes with so much bitterness that I quite share her sorrow; but it is not so much because she is a captive, but because some one, who is most dear to her, has been slain in this fray. I have visited her, and tried to console her; and begged her to forget her grief and become my companion. But nothing soothes her, and tears flow for ever from eyes which are the most beautiful I ever beheld."

"This is the land of beautiful eyes," said Tancred, and Astarte almost unconsciously glanced at the speaker.

Cypros, who had quitted the attendant maidens immediately on the entrance of the two princes, after an interval, returned. There was some excitement on her countenance as she approached her mistress, and addressed Astarte in a hushed but hurried tone. It seemed that the fair captive of the Queen of the Ansarey had most unexpectedly expressed to Cypros her wish to repair to the divan of the Queen, although, the whole day, she had frequently refused to descend. Cypros feared that the presence of the two guests of her mistress might prove an obstacle to the fulfilment of this wish, as the

freedom of social intercourse that prevailed among the Ansarey was unknown even among the ever-veiled women of the Maronites and Druses. But the fair captive had no prejudices on this head, and Cypros had accordingly descended to request the royal permission, or consult the royal will. Astarte spoke to Keferinis, who listened with an air of great profundity, and finally bowed assent, and Cypros retired.

Astarte had signified to Tancred her wish that he should approach her, while Keferinis at some distance was engaged in earnest conversation with Fakredeen, with whom he had not had previously the opportunity of being alone. His report of all that had transpired in his absence was highly favourable. The minister had taken the opportunity of the absence of the Emir and his friend to converse often and amply about them with the Queen. The idea of a united Syria was pleasing to the imagination of the young sovereign. The suggestion was eminently practicable. It required no extravagant combinations, no hazardous chances of fortune nor fine expedients of political skill. A union between Fakredeen and Astarte at once connected the most important interests of the mountains without exciting the alarm or displeasure of other powers. The union was as legitimate as it would ultimately prove irresistible. It ensured a respectable revenue and a considerable force; and, with prudence and vigilance, the occasion would soon offer to achieve all the rest. On the next paroxysm in the dissolving empire of the Ottomans, the plain would be occupied by a warlike population descending from

the mountains that commanded on one side the whole Syrian coast, and on the other all the inland cities from Aleppo to Damascus.

The eye of the young Emir glittered with triumph as he listened to the oily sentences of the eunuch. "Lebanon," he whispered "is the key of Syria, my Keferinis — never forget that; and we will lock up the land. Let us never sleep till this affair is achieved. You think she does not dream of a certain person, eh? I tell you, he must go, or we must get rid of him: I fear him not, but he is in the way; and the way should be smooth as the waters of El Arish. Remember the temple to the Syrian goddess at Deir el Kamar, my Keferinis! The religion is half the battle. How I shall delight to get rid of my bishops and those accursed monks — drones, drivellers, bigots, drinking my golden wine of Canobia, and smoking my delicate Latakia. You know Canobia, my Keferinis; but you have heard of it. You have been at Bteddeen? Well, Bteddeen to Canobia is an Arab moon to a Syrian sun. The marble alone at Canobia cost a million of piastres. The stables are worthy of the steeds of Solomon. You may kill anything you like in the forest, from panthers to antelopes. Listen, my Keferinis, let this be done, and done quickly, and Canobia is yours."

"Do you ever dream?" said Astarte to Tancred.

"They say that life is a dream."

"I sometimes wish it were. Its pangs are too acute for a shadow."

"But you have no pangs."

"I had a dream when you were away, in which I was very much alarmed," said Astarte.

"Indeed!"

"I thought that Gindarics was taken by the Jews. I suppose you have talked of them to me so much that my slumbering memory wandered."

"It is a resistless and exhaustless theme," said Tancred; "for the greatness and happiness of everything, Gindarics included, are comprised in the principles of which they were the first propagators."

"Nevertheless, I should be sorry if my dream came to be true," said Astarte.

"May your dreams be as bright and happy as your lot, royal lady!" said Tancred.

"My lot is not bright and happy," said the Queen; "once I thought it was, but I think so no longer."

"But why?"

"I wish you could have a dream and find out," said the Queen. "Disquietude is sometimes as perplexing as pleasure. Both come and go like birds."

"Like the pigeon you sent to Damascus," said Tancred.

"Ah! why did I send it!"

"*Because* you were most gracious, lady."

"Because I was very rash, noble prince."

"When the great deeds are done to which this visit will lead, you will not think so."

"I am not born for great deeds; I am a woman, and I am content with beautiful ones."

"You still dream of the Syrian goddess," said Tancred.

"No; not of the Syrian goddess. Tell me: they say the Hebrew women are very lovely — is it so?"

"They have that reputation."

"But do you think so?"

"I have known some distinguished for their beauty."

"Do they resemble the statue in our temple?"

"Their style is different," said Tancred; "the Greek and the Hebrew are both among the highest types of the human form."

"But you prefer the Hebrew?"

"I am not so discriminating a critic," said Tancred; "I admire the beautiful."

"Well, here comes my captive," said the Queen; "if you like you shall free her, for she wonderfully takes me. She is a Georgian, I suppose, and bears the palm from all of us. I will not presume to contend with her: she would vanquish perhaps even that fair Jewess of whom, I hear, you are so enamoured."

Tancred started, and would have replied, but Cypros advanced at this moment with her charge, who withdrew her veil as she seated herself, as commanded, before the Queen. She withdrew her veil, and Fakredeen and Tancred beheld Eva!

CHAPTER VII.

In one of a series of chambers excavated in the mountains, yet connected with the more artificial portion of the palace, chambers and galleries which in the course of ages had served for many purposes, sometimes of security, sometimes of punishment — treasuries not unfrequently, and occasionally prisons; in one of these vast cells, feebly illumined from apertures above, lying on a rude couch with her countenance hidden, motionless and miserable, was the beautiful daughter of Besso, one who had been bred in all the delights of the most refined luxury, and in the enjoyment of a freedom not common in any land, and most rare among the easterns.

The events of her life had been so strange and rapid during the last few days that, even amid her woe, she revolved in her mind their startling import. It was little more than ten days since, under the guardianship of her father, she had commenced her journey from Damascus to Aleppo. When they had proceeded about half way, they were met at the city of Homs by a detachment of Turkish soldiers, sent by the Pacha of Aleppo, at the request of Hillel Besso, to escort them, the country being much troubled in consequence of the feud with the Ansarey. Notwithstanding these precautions, and although, from the advices they received, they took a circuitous and unexpected course, they were attacked by the mountaineers within

half a day's journey of Aleppo; and with so much strength and spirit, that their guards, after some resistance, fled and dispersed, while Eva and her attendants, after seeing her father cut down in her defence, was carried a prisoner to Gindarics.

Overwhelmed by the fate of her father, she was at first insensible to her own — and was indeed so distracted that she delivered herself up to despair. She was beginning in some degree to collect her senses, and to survey her position with some comparative calmness, when she learnt from the visit of Cypros that Fakredeen and Tancred were, by a strange coincidence, under the same roof as herself. Then she recalled the kind sympathy and offers of consolation that had been evinced and proffered to her by the mistress of the castle, to whose expressions at the time she had paid but an imperfect attention. Under these circumstances she earnestly requested permission to avail herself of a privilege, which had been previously offered and refused, to become the companion, rather than the captive of the Queen of the Ansarey; so that she might find some opportunity of communicating with her two friends, of inquiring about her father, and of consulting with them as to the best steps to be adopted in her present exigency.

The interview, from which so much was anticipated, had turned out as strange and as distressful as any of the recent incidents to which it was to have brought balm and solace. Recognised instantly by Tancred and the young Emir, and greeted with a tender respect, almost equal to the surprise and *sorrow which they* felt at beholding her, Astarte, hitherto so

unexpectedly gracious to her captive, appeared suddenly agitated, excited, haughty, even hostile. The Queen had immediately summoned Fakredeen to her side, and there passed between them some hurried and perturbed explanations; subsequently she addressed some inquiries to Tancred, to which he replied without reserve. Soon afterwards, Astarte, remaining intent and moody, the court was suddenly broken up; Keferinis signifying to the young men that they should retire, while Astarte, without bestowing on them her usual farewell, rose, and, followed by her maidens, quitted the chamber. As for Eva, instead of returning to one of the royal apartments which had been previously allotted to her, she was conducted to what was in fact a prison.

There she had passed the night and a portion of the ensuing day, visited only by Cypros, who, when Eva would have inquired the cause of all this mysterious cruelty and startling contrast to the dispositions which had preceded it, only shook her head and pressed her finger to her lip, to signify the impossibility of her conversing with her captive.

It was one of those situations where the most gifted are deserted by their intelligence; where there is as little to guide as to console; where the mystery is as vast as the misfortune; and the tortured apprehension finds it impossible to grapple with irresistible circumstances.

In this state, the daughter of Besso, plunged in a dark reverie, in which the only object visible to her mind's eye was the last glance of her dying father, was roused from her ab-

proaching stupor by a sound, distinct yet muffled, as if some one wished to attract her attention, without startling her by too sudden an interruption. She looked up; again she heard the sound, and then, in a whispered tone, her name —

"Eva!"

"I am here."

"Hush!" said a figure, stealing into the caverned chamber, and then throwing off his Syrian cloak, revealing to her one whom she recognised.

"Fakredeen," she said, starting from her couch, "what is all this?"

The countenance of Fakredeen was distressed and agitated; there was an expression of alarm, almost of terror, stamped upon his features.

"You must follow me," he said; "there is not a moment to lose; you must fly!"

"Why and whither?" said Eva. "This capture is one of plunder not of malice, or was so a few hours back. It is not sorrow for myself that overwhelmed me. But yesterday, the sovereign of these mountains treated me with a generous sympathy, and, if it brought me no solace, it was only because events have borne, I fear, irremediable woe. And now, I suddenly find myself among my friends — friends, who, of all others, I should most have wished to encounter at this moment, and all is changed. I am a prisoner, under every circumstance of harshness, even of cruelty, and you speak *to me as if my life*, my immediate existence, was in peril."

"It is."

"But why?"

Fakredeen wrung his hands, and murmured "Let us go."

"I scarcely care to live," said Eva; "and I will not move until you give me some clue to all this mystery."

"Well then, she is jealous of you — the queen, Astarte — she is jealous of you with the English prince — that man that has brought us all so many vexations."

"Is it he that has brought us so many vexations?" replied Eva. "The queen jealous of me, and with the English prince! 'T is very strange. We scarcely exchanged a dozen sentences together, when all was disturbed and broken up. Jealous of me! Why then was she anxious that I should descend to her divan? This is not the truth, Fakredeen."

"Not all; but it is the truth — it is, indeed. The Queen is jealous of you: she is in love with Tancred; a curse be on him and her both! and somebody has told her that Tancred is in love with you."

"Somebody! When did they tell her?"

"Long ago; long ago. She knew — that is, she had been told, that Tancred was affianced to the daughter of Besso of Damascus; and so this sudden meeting brought about a crisis. I did what I could to prevent it; vowed that you were only the cousin of the Besso that she meant, did everything in short I could to serve and save you — but it was of no use. She was wild, is wild, and your life is in peril."

Eva mused a moment. Then, looking up, she said —

"Fakredeen, it is you, who told the Queen this story. You are the somebody who has invented this fatal falsehood. What was your object I care not to inquire, knowing full well, that, if you had an object, you never would spare friend or foe. Leave me. I have little wish to live: but I believe in the power of truth. I will confront the Queen and tell her all. She will credit what I say; if she do not, I can meet my fate — but I will not, now or ever, entrust it to you."

Thereupon, Fakredeen burst into a flood of passionate tears, and, throwing himself on the ground, kissed Eva's feet, and clung to her garments which he embraced, sobbing, and moaning, and bestowing on her endless phrases of affection, mixed with imprecations on his own head and conduct.

"O Eva! my beloved Eva, sister of my soul, it is of no use telling you any lies! Yes, I am that villain and that idiot, who has brought about all this misery — misery enough to turn me mad, and which, by a just retribution, has destroyed all the brilliant fortunes which were at last opening on me. This Frank stranger was the only bar to my union with the sovereign of these mountains, whose beauty you have witnessed, whose power, combined with my own, would found a kingdom. I wished to marry her. You cannot be angry with me, Eva, for that. You know very well that, if you had married me yourself, we should neither of us have been in the horrible situation in which we now find ourselves. Ah! that would have been a happy union! But let that pass. I have *always been* the most unfortunate of men; I have never had

justice done me. Well, she loved this Prince of Franguestan: I saw it — nothing escapes me. I let her know that he was devoted to another. Why I mentioned your name I cannot well say; perhaps because it was the first that occurred to me; perhaps because I have a lurking suspicion that he really does love you. The information worked. My own suit prospered. I bribed her minister. He is devoted to me. All was smiling. How could I possibly have anticipated that you would ever arrive here! When I saw you, I felt that all was lost. I endeavoured to rally affairs, but it was useless. Tancred has no finesse; his replies neutralized, nay, destroyed, all my counter-representations. The Queen is a whirlwind. She is young, she has never been crossed in her life. You cannot argue with her when her heart is touched. In short, all is ruined;" and Fakredeen hid his weeping face in the robes of Eva.

"What misery you prepare for yourself, and for all who know you!" exclaimed Eva. "But that has happened that makes me insensible to further grief."

"Yes, but listen to what I say, and all will go right. I do not care in the least for my own disappointment. That now is nothing. It is you, it is of you only that I think, whom I wish to save. Do not chide me, — pardon me, pardon me, as you have done a thousand times; pardon and pity me. I am so young and really so inexperienced; after all I am only a child, besides I have not a friend in the world except you. I am a villain, a fool — all villains are. I know it. But I cannot

help it. I did not make myself. The question now is, how are we to get out of this scrape? how are we to save your life?"

"Do you really mean, Fakredeen, that my life is in peril?"

"Yes, I do," said the Emir, crying like a child.

"You do not know the power of truth, Fakredeen. You have no confidence in it. Let me see the Queen."

"Impossible!" he said, starting up and looking very much alarmed.

"Why?"

"Because, in the first place she is mad. Keferinis — that is, her minister — one of my creatures, and the only person who can manage her, told me this moment that it was a perfect kamsin, and that if he approached her again, it would be at his own risk; and in the second place, bad as things are, they would necessarily be much worse if she saw you, because — and it is of no use concealing it any longer, she thinks you already — dead."

"Dead! Already dead!"

"Yes."

"And where is — your friend and companion," said Eva. "Does he know of these horrors?"

"No one knows of them except myself. The Queen sent for me last night to speak to me of the subject generally. It was utterly vain to attempt to disabuse her; it would only have compromised all of us. She would only have supposed *the truth to be* an invention for the moment. I found your fate

sealed. In my desperation, the only thing that occurred to me was to sympathize with her indignation and approve of all her projects. She apprised me that you should not live four and twenty hours. I rather stimulated her vengeance, told her in secrecy that your house had nearly effected my ruin, and that there was no sacrifice I would not make, and no danger that I would not encounter, to wreak on your race my long cherished revenge. I assured her that I had been watching my opportunity for years. Well, you see how it is, Eva — she consigned to me the commission which she would have whispered to one of her slaves. I am here with her cognizance — indeed, by this time she thinks 't is all over. You comprehend?"

"You are to be my executioner?"

"Yes; I have undertaken that office, in order to save your life."

"I care not to save my life. What is life to me, since he perhaps is gone who gave me that life, and for whom alone I lived!"

"O! Eva — Eva, don't distract me; don't drive me absolutely mad! When a man is doing what I am for your sake — giving up a kingdom, and more than a kingdom — to treat him thus! But you never did me justice." And Fakredeen poured forth renewed tears. "Keferinis is in my pay; I have got the signet of the covered way. Here are two Mamlouk dresses; one you must put on. Without the gates are two

good steeds, and in eight and forty hours we shall be safe, and smiling again."

"I shall never smile again," said Eva. "No, Fakredeen," she added, after a moment's pause. "I will not fly, and you cannot fly. Can you leave alone in this wild place that friend — too faithful, I believe — whom you have been the means of leading hither?"

"Never mind him," said the Emir. "I wish we had never seen him. He is quite safe. She may keep him a prisoner perhaps. What then? He makes so discreet a use of his liberty that a little durance will not be very injurious. His life will be safe enough. Cutting off his head is not the way to gain his heart. But time presses. Come, my sister — my beloved Eva! In a few hours it may not be in my power to effect all this. Come, think of your father — of his anxiety, his grief. One glimpse of you will do him more service than the most cunning leech."

Eva burst into passionate tears. "He will never see us again. I saw him fall; never shall I forget that moment!" and she hid her face in her hands.

"But he lives," said Fakredeen. "I have been speaking to some of the Turkish prisoners. They also saw him fall; but he was borne off the field, and, though insensible, it was believed that the wound was not fatal. Trust me, he is at Aleppo."

"*They saw him* borne off the field!"

"Safe, and, if not well, far from desperate."

"O God of my fathers," said Eva, falling on her knees, "thine is indeed a mercy-seat!"

"Yes, yes; there is nothing like the God of your fathers, Eva. If you knew the things that are going on in this place, even in these vaults and caverns, you would not tarry here an instant. They worship nothing but graven images, and the Queen has fallen in love with Tancred, because he resembles a marble statue older than the times of the pre-Adamite Sultauns. Come, come!"

"But how could they know that he was far from desperate?"

"I will show you the man who spoke to him," said Fakredeen; "he is only with our horses. You can ask him any questions you like. Come, put on your Mamlouk dress — every minute is golden."

"There seems to me something base in leaving him here alone," said Eva. "He has eaten our salt, he is the child of our tents, his blood will be upon our heads."

"Well, then, fly for his sake," said Fakredeen; "here you cannot aid him; but when you are once in safety, a thousand things may be done for his assistance. I could return, for example."

"Now, Fakredeen," said Eva, stopping him, and speaking in a solemn tone, "if I accompany you, as you now require,

will you pledge me your word, that the moment we pass the frontier you will return to him?"

"I swear it, by our true religion, and by my hopes of an earthly crown."

CHAPTER VIII.

The sudden apparition of Eva at Gindarics, and the scene of painful mystery by which it was followed, had plunged Tancred into the greatest anxiety and affliction. It was in vain that, the moment they had quitted the presence of Astarte, he appealed to Fakredeen for some explanation of what had occurred, and for some counsel as to the course they should immediately pursue to assist one in whose fate they were both so deeply interested. The Emir, for the first time since their acquaintance, seemed entirely to have lost himself. He looked perplexed — almost stunned; his language was incoherent, his gestures those of despair. Tancred, while he at once ascribed all this confused demeanour to the shock which he had himself shared at finding the daughter of Besso a captive, and a captive under circumstances of doubt and difficulty, could not reconcile such distraction, such an absence of all resources and presence of mind, with the exuberant means and the prompt expedients which in general were the characteristics of his companion, under circumstances the most difficult and unforeseen.

When they had reached their apartments, Fakredeen threw himself upon the divan and moaned, and, suddenly starting from the couch, paced the chamber with agitated step, wringing his hands. All that Tancred could extract from him was

an exclamation of despair, an imprecation on his own head, and an expression of fear and horror at Eva having fallen into the hands of Pagans and idolaters.

It was in vain also that Tancred endeavoured to communicate with Keferinis. The minister was invisible — not to be found, and the night closed in, when Tancred, after fruitless counsels with Baroni, and many united but vain efforts to open some communication with Eva, delivered himself not to repose, but to a distracted reverie over the present harassing and critical affairs.

When the dawn broke, he rose and sought Fakredeen, but, to his surprise, he found that his companion had already quitted his appartment. An unusual stillness seemed to pervade Gindarics this day — not a person was visible. Usually at sunrise all were astir, and, shortly afterwards, Keferinis generally paid a visit to the guests of his sovereign; but this day Keferinis omitted the ceremony, and Tancred, never more anxious for companions and counsellors, found himself entirely alone; for Baroni was about making observations, and endeavouring to find some clue to the position of Eva.

Tancred had resolved, the moment that it was practicable, to solicit an audience of Astarte on the subject of Eva, and to enter into all the representations respecting her which, in his opinion, were alone necessary to secure for her immediately the most considerate treatment, and ultimately a courteous release. The very circumstance that she was united to the *Emir of Canobia* by ties so dear and intimate, and was also an

individual to whom he himself was indebted for such generous aid and such invaluable services, would, he of course assumed, independently of her own interesting personal qualities, enlist the kind feelings of Astarte in her favour. The difficultly was to obtain this audience of Astarte, for neither Fakredeen nor Keferinis was to be found, and no other means of achieving the result were obvious.

About two hours before noon, Baroni brought word that he had contrived to see Cypros, from whom he gathered that Astarte had repaired to the great temple of the gods. Instantly, Tancred resolved to enter the palace, and if possible to find his way to the mysterious sanctuary. That was a course by no means easy; but the enterprising are often fortunate, and his project proved not to be impossible. He passed through the chambers of the palace, which were entirely deserted, and with which he was familiar, and he reached without difficulty the portal of bronze, which led to the covered way that conducted to the temple, but it was closed. Baffled and almost in despair, a distant chorus reached his ear, then the tramp of feet, and then slowly the portal opened. He imagined that the Queen was returning; but on the contrary, pages and women and priests swept by without observing him, for he was hidden by one of the opened valves, but Astarte was not there; and, though the venture was rash, Tancred did not hesitate, as the last individual in the procession moved on, to pass the gate. The portal shut instantly with a clang, and Tancred found himself

alone and in comparative darkness. His previous experience, however, sustained him. His eye, fresh from the sunlight, at first wandered in obscurity, but by degrees, habituated to the atmosphere, though dim, the way was sufficiently indicated, and he advanced, till the light became each step more powerful, and soon he emerged upon the platform, which faced the mountain temple at the end of the ravine — a still and wondrous scene, more striking now, if possible, when viewed alone, with his heart the prey of many emotions. How full of adventure is life! It is monotonous only to the monotonous. There may be no longer fiery dragons, magic rings, or fairy wands, to interfere in its course and to influence our career; but the relations of men are far more complicated and numerous than of yore; and, in the play of the passions, and in the devices of creative spirits, that have thus a proportionately greater sphere for their action, there are spells of social sorcery more potent than all the necromancy of Merlin or Friar Bacon.

Tancred entered the temple, the last refuge of the Olympian mind. It was race that produced these inimitable forms, the idealized reflex of their own peculiar organization. Their principles of art, practised by a different race, do not produce the same results. Yet we shut our eyes to the great truth into which all truths merge, and we call upon the Pict or the Sarmatian to produce the forms of Phidias and Praxiteles.

Not devoid of that awe, which is caused by the presence of

the solemn and the beautiful, Tancred slowly traced his steps through the cavern sanctuary. No human being was visible. Upon his right was the fane to which Astarte led him on his visit of initiation. He was about to enter it, when, kneeling before the form of the Apollo of Antioch, he beheld the fair Queen of the Ansarey, motionless and speechless, her arms crossed upon her breast, and her eyes fixed upon her divinity, in a dream of ecstatic devotion.

The splendour of the ascending sun fell full upon the statue, suffusing the ethereal form with radiancy, and spreading around it for some space a broad and golden halo. As Tancred, recognising the Queen, withdrew a few paces, his shadow clearly defined, rested on the glowing wall of the rock temple. Astarte uttered an exclamation, rose quickly from her kneeling position, and, looking round, her eyes met those of Lord Montacute. Instantly she withdrew her gaze, blushing deeply.

"I was about to retire," murmured Tancred.

"And why should you retire?" said Astarte, in a soft voice, looking up.

"There are moments when solitude is sacred."

"I am too much alone: often, and of late especially, I feel a painful isolation."

She moved forward, and they re-entered together the chief temple, and then emerged into the sunlight. They stood beneath the broad Ionic portico, beholding the strange scene around. Then it was that Tancred, observing that Astarte

cared not to advance, and deeming the occasion very favourable to his wishes, proceeded to explain to her the cause of his venturing to intrude on her this morning. He spoke with that earnestness, and, if the phrase may be used, that passionate repose, which distinguished him. He enlarged on the character of Besso, his great virtues, his amiable qualities, his benevolence and unbounded generosity; he sought in every way to engage the kind feelings of Astarte in favour of his family, and to interest her in the character of Eva, on which he dilated with all the eloquence of his heart. Truly, he almost did justice to her admirable qualities, her vivid mind, and lofty spirit, and heroic courage; the occasion was too delicate to treat of the personal charms of another woman, but he did not conceal his own deep sense of obligation to Eva for her romantic expedition to the desert on his behalf.

"You can understand then," concluded Tancred, "what must have been my astonishment and grief when I found her yesterday a captive. It was some consolation to me to remember in whose power she had fallen, and I hasten to throw myself at your feet to supplicate for her safety and her freedom."

"Yes, I can understand all this," said Astarte, in a low tone.

Tancred looked at her. Her voice had struck him with pain: her countenance still more distressed him. Nothing could afford a more complete contrast to the soft and glowing *visage that a* few moments before he had beheld in the fane of

Apollo. She was quite pale, almost livid; her features, of exquisite shape, had become hard and even distorted; all the bad passions of our nature seemed suddenly to have concentred in that face which usually combined perfect beauty of form with an expression the most gentle, and in truth lovely.

"Yes, I can understand all this," said Astarte, "but I shall not exercise any power which I may possess to assist you in violating the laws of your country and outraging the wishes of your sovereign."

"Violating the laws of my country!" exclaimed Tancred, with a perplexed look.

"Yes, I know all. Your schemes truly are very heroic and very flattering to our self-love. We are to lend our lances to place on the throne of Syria one who would not be permitted to reside in your own country, much less to rule in it?"

"Of whom — of what — do you speak?"

"I speak of the Jewess whom you would marry," said Astarte, in a hushed yet distinct voice, and with a fell glance, "against all laws, divine and human."

"Of your prisoner?"

"Well you may call her my prisoner: she is secure."

"Is it possible that you can believe that I even am a suitor of the daughter of Besso?" said Tancred, very earnestly. "I wear the Cross, which is graven on my heart, and have a heavenly mission to fulfil, from which no earthly thought shall ever distract me. But even were I more than sensible to her

charms and virtues, she is affianced, or the same as affianced, nor have I the least reason to suppose that he who will possess her hand does not command her heart."

"Affianced?"

"Not only affianced — but, until this sad adventure, on the very point of being wedded. She was on her way from Damascus to Aleppo, to be united to her cousin, when she was brought hither, where she will, I trust, not long remain your prisoner."

The countenance of Astarte changed; but, though it lost its painful and vindictive expression, it did not assume one of less distress. After a moment's pause, she murmured — "Can this be true?"

"Who could have told you otherwise?"

"An enemy of hers — of her family," continued Astarte, in a low voice, and speaking as if absorbed in thought; "one who admitted to me his long hoarded vengeance against her house."

Then turning abruptly, she looked Tancred full in the face, with a glance of almost fierce scrutiny. His clear brow and unfaltering eye, with an expression of sympathy and even kindness on his countenance, met her searching look.

"No," she said; "it is impossible that you can be false."

"Why should I be false? or what is it that mixes up my name and life with these thoughts and circumstances?"

"*Why should* you be false! Ah! there it is," said

Astarte, in a sweet and mournful voice. "What are any of us to you!" And she wept.

"It grieves me to see you in sorrow," said Tancred, approaching her, and speaking in a tone of kindness.

"I am more than sorrowful: this unhappy lady —" and the voice of Astarte was overpowered by her emotion.

"You will send her back in safety and with honour to her family," said Tancred, soothingly. "I would fain believe her father has not fallen. My intendant assures me, that there are Turkish soldiers here, who saw him borne from the field. A little time, and their griefs will vanish. You will have the satisfaction of having acted with generosity, with that good heart which characterizes you; and, as for the daughter of Besso, all will be forgotten as she gives one hand to her father and the other to her husband."

"It is too late!" said Astarte, in an almost sepulchral voice.

"What is that?"

"It is too late! The daughter of Besso is no more."

"Jesu preserve us!" exclaimed Tancred, starting. "Speak it again: what is it that you say?"

Astarte shook her head.

"Woman!" said Tancred, and he seized her hand, but his thoughts were too wild for utterance, and he remained pallid and panting.

"The daughter of Besso is no more; and I do not lament it, for you loved her."

"Oh, grief ineffable!" said Tancred, with a groan, looking up to heaven, and covering his face with his hands: "I loved her, as I loved the stars and sunshine." Then, after a pause, he turned to Astarte, and said, in a rapid voice — "This dreadful deed — when, how, did it happen?"

"Is it so dreadful?"

"Almost as dreadful as such words from woman's lips. A curse be on the hour that I entered these walls!"

"No, no, no!" said Astarte, and she seized his arm distractedly. "No, no! No curse!"

"It is not true!" said Tancred. "It cannot be true! She is not dead."

"Would she were not — if her death is to bring me curses."

"Tell me when was this?"

"An hour ago, at least."

"I do not believe it. There is not an arm that would have dared to touch her. Let us hasten to her. It is not too late."

"Alas, it is too late!" said Astarte. "It was an enemy's arm that undertook the deed."

"An enemy! What enemy among your people could the daughter of Besso have found?"

"A deadly one, who seized the occasion offered to a long cherished vengeance; one who for years has been alike the foe and the victim of her race and house. There is no hope!"

"*I am indeed* amazed. Who could this be?"

"Your friend — at least, your supposed friend — the Emir of the Lebanon."

"Fakredeen!"

"You have said it."

"The assassin and the foe of Eva!" exclaimed Tancred, with a countenance relieved yet infinitely perplexed. "There must be some great misconception in all this. Let us hasten to the castle."

"He solicited the office," said Astarte; "he wreaked his vengeance, while he vindicated my outraged feelings."

"By murdering his dearest friend — the only being to whom he is really devoted — his more than friend, his foster-sister — nursed by the same heart; the ally and inspiration of his life, to whom he himself was a suitor, and might have been a successful one, had it not been for the custom of her religion and her race, which shrink from any connexion with strangers and with Nazarenes."

"His foster-sister!" exclaimed Astarte.

At this moment Cypros appeared in the distance, hastening to Astarte with an agitated air. Her looks were disturbed she was almost breathless when she reached them; she wrung her hands before she spoke.

"Royal lady!" at length she said, "I hastened as you instructed me, at the appointed hour, to the Emir Fakredeen, but I learnt that he had quitted the castle. Then I repaired to the prisoner; but woe is me, she is not to be found!"

"Not to be found!"

"The raiment that she wore is lying on the floor of her prison. Methinks she has fled."

"She has fled with him who was false to us all," said Astarte, "for it was the Emir of the Lebanon who long ago told me that you were affianced to the daughter of Besso, and who warned me against joining in any enterprise which was only to place upon the throne of Syria one whom the laws of your own country would never recognise as your wife."

"Intriguer!" said Tancred. "Vile and inveterate intriguer!"

"It is well," said Astarte, "My spirit is more serene."

"Would that Eva were with any one else!" said Tancred, thoughtfully, and speaking, as it were, to himself.

"Your thoughts are with the daughter of Besso," said Astarte. "You wish to follow her, to guard her, to restore her to her family."

Tancred looked round and caught the glance of the Queen of the Ansarey, mortified, yet full of affection.

"It seems to me," he said, "that it is time for me to terminate a visit that has already occasioned you, royal lady, too much vexation."

Astarte burst into tears.

"Let me go," she said, "you want a throne; this is a rude one, yet accept it. You require warriors, the Ansarey are invincible. My castle is not like those palaces of Antioch, of which we have often talked, and which were worthy of you, *but Gindarics* is impregnable, and will serve you for your

head-quarters until you conquer that world which you are born to command."

"I have been the unconscious agent in petty machinations," said Tancred. "I must return to the Desert to recover the purity of my mind. It is Arabia alone that can regenerate the world."

At this moment Cypros, who was standing apart, waved her scarf, and exclaimed, "Royal lady, I perceive in the distance the everfaithful messenger;" whereupon Astarte looked up, and, as yet invisible to the inexperienced glance of Tancred, recognised what was an infinitely small dusky speck, each moment becoming more apparent, until at length a bird was observed by all of them winging its way towards the Queen.

"Is it the ever-faithful Karaguus," said Astarte, "or is it Rubylips that ever brings good news?"

"It is Karaguus," said Cypros, as the bird drew nearer and nearer, "but it is not Karaguus of Damascus. By the ring on its neck, it is Karaguus of Aleppo."

The pigeon now was only a few yards above the head of the Queen. Fatigued, but with an eye full of resolution, it fluttered for a moment, and then fell upon her bosom. Cypros advanced and lifted its weary wing, and untied the cartel which it bore—brief words, but full of meaning, and a terrible interest.

"*The Pacha, at the head of five thousand regular troops, leaves Haleb to-morrow to invade* our land."

"Go," said Astarte to Tancred; "to remain here is now dangerous. Thanks to the faithful messenger, you have time to escape with ease from that land which you scorned to rule, and which loved you too well."

"I cannot leave it in the hour of peril," said Tancred. "This invasion of the Ottomans may lead to results of which none dream. I will meet them at the head of your warriors!"

CHAPTER IX.

"Is there any news?" asked Adam Besso of Issachar, the son of Selim, the most cunning leech at Aleppo, and who by day and by night watched the couch which bore the suffering form of the pride and mainstay of the Syrian Hebrews.

"There is news, but it has not yet arrived," replied Issachar, the son of Selim, a man advanced in life, but hale, with a white beard, a bright eye, and a benignant visage.

"There are pearls in the sea, but what are they worth?" murmured Besso.

"I have taken a Cabala," said Issachar, the son of Selim, "and three times that I opened the sacred book, there were three words, and the initial letter of each word is the name of a person who will enter this room this day, and every person will bring news."

"But what news?" sighed Besso. "The news of Tophet and of ten thousand demons?"

"I have taken a Cabala," said Issachar, the son of Selim, "and the news will be good."

"To whom and from whom? Good to the Pacha but not to me! — good to the people of Haleb, but not, perhaps, to the family of Besso."

"God will guard over his own. In the mean while, I must

replace this bandage, noble Besso. Let me rest your arm upon this cushion and you will endure less pain."

"Alas! worthy Issachar, I have wounds deeper than any you can probe."

The resignation peculiar to the Orientals had sustained Besso under his overwhelming calamity. He neither wailed nor moaned. Absorbed in a brooding silence he awaited the result of the measures which had been taken for the release of Eva, sustained by the chance of success, and caring not to survive if encountering failure. The Pacha of Aleppo, long irritated by the Ansarey, and meditating for some time an invasion of their country, had been fired by the all-influential representations of the family of Besso instantly to undertake a step which, although it had been for some time contemplated, might yet, according to Turkish custom, have been indefinitely postponed. Three regiments of the line, disciplined in the manner of Europe, some artillery, and a strong detachment of cavalry, had been ordered at once to invade the contiguous territory of the Ansarey. Hillel Besso had accompanied the troops, leaving his uncle under his paternal roof, disabled by his late conflict, but suffering from wounds which in themselves were serious rather than perilous.

Four days had elapsed since the troops had quitted Aleppo. It was the part of Hillel, before they had recourse to hostile movements to obtain, if possible, the restoration of the prisoners by fair means; nor were any resources wanting to effect *this purpose.* A courier had arrived at Aleppo from Hillel,

apprising Adam Besso that the Queen of the Ansarey had not only refused to give up the prisoners, but even declared that Eva had been already released; but Hillel concluded that this was merely trifling. This parleying had taken place on the border; the troops were about to force the passes on the following day.

About an hour before sunset, on the very same day that Issachar, the son of Selim, had taken more than one Cabala, some horsemen, in disorder, were observed from the walls by the inhabitants of Aleppo, galloping over the plain. They were soon recognised as the cavalry of the Pacha, the irregular heralds, it was presumed, of a triumph achieved. Hillel Besso, covered with sweat and dust, was among those who thus early arrived. He hastened at a rapid pace through the suburb of the city, scattering random phrases to those who inquired after intelligence as he passed, until he reached the courtyard of his own house.

"'T is well," he observed, as he closed the gate. "A battle is a fine thing, but, for my part, I am not sorry to find myself at home."

"What is that?" inquired Adam Besso, as a noise reached his ear.

"'T is the letter of the first Cabala," replied Issachar, the son of Selim.

"Uncle, it is I," said Hillel, advancing.

"Speak," said Adam Besso, in an agitated voice; "my sight is dark."

"Alas, I am alone!" said Hillel.

"Bury me in Jehoshaphat," murmured Besso, as he sank back.

"But, my uncle, there is hope."

"Speak then of hope," replied Besso, with sudden vehemence, and starting from his pillow.

"Truly I have seen a child of the mountains, who persists in the tale that our Eva has escaped."

"An enemy's device! Are the mountains ours? Where are the troops?"

"Were the mountains ours, I should not be here, my uncle. Look from the ramparts, and you will soon see the plain covered with the troops, at least with all of them who have escaped the matchlocks and the lances of the Ansarey."

"Are they such sons of fire?"

"When the Queen of the Ansarey refused to deliver up the prisoners, and declared that Eva was not in her power, the Pacha resolved to penetrate the passes, in two detachments, on the following morning. The enemy was drawn up in array to meet us, but fled after a feeble struggle. Our artillery seemed to carry all before it. But," continued Hillel, shrugging his shoulders, "war is not by any means a commercial transaction. It seemed that, when we were on the point of victory, we were in fact entirely defeated. The enemy had truly made a feigned defence, and had only allured us into the passes, where they fired on us from the heights; and rolled *down upon our* confused masses huge fragments of rock. Our

strength, our numbers, and our cannon, only embarrassed us; there arose a confusion; the troops turned and retreated. And, when every thing was in the greatest perplexity, and we were regaining the plains, our rear was pursued by crowds of cavalry, Kurds, and other Giaours, who destroyed our men with their long lances, uttering horrible shouts. For my own part, I thought all was over, but a good horse is not a bad thing, and I am here, my uncle, having ridden for twenty hours, nearly, without a pause."

"And when did you see this child of the mountains who spoke of the lost one?" asked Besso, in a low and broken voice.

"On the eve of the engagement," said Hillel. "He had been sent to me with a letter, but alas! had been plundered on his way by our troops, and the letter had been destroyed or lost. Nevertheless, he induced them to permit him to reach my tent, and brought these words, that the ever adorable had truly quitted the mountains, and that the lost letter had been written to that effect by the chieftain of the Ansarey."

"Is there yet hope? What sound is that?"

"'T is the letter of the second Cabala," said Issachar, the son of Selim.

And at this moment entered the chamber a faithful slave, who made signs to the physician, upon which Issachar rose, and was soon engaged in earnest conversation with him who had entered; Hillel tending the side of Besso. After a few minutes, Issachar approached the couch of his patient, and

said, "Here is one, my lord and friend, who brings good tidings of your daughter."

"God of my fathers!" exclaimed Besso, passionately, and springing up.

"Still we must be calm," said Issachar — "still we must be calm."

"Let me see him," said Besso.

"It is one you know, and know well," said Issachar. "It is the Emir Fakredeen."

"The son of my heart," said Besso, "who brings me news that is honey in my mouth."

"I am here, my father of fathers," said Fakredeen, gliding to the side of the couch.

Besso grasped his hand, and looked at him earnestly in the face. "Speak of Eva," he at length said, in a voice of choking agitation.

"She is well — she is safe. Yes, I have saved her," said Fakredeen, burying his face in the pillow, exhausted by emotion. "Yes, I have not lived in vain."

"Your flag shall wave on a thousand castles," said Besso. "My child is saved, and she is saved by the brother of her heart. Entirely has the God of our fathers guarded over us. Henceforth, my Fakredeen, you have only to wish: we are the same." And Besso sank down almost insensible; then he made a vain effort to rise again, murmuring, "Eva!"

"She will soon be here," said Fakredeen; "she only *rests awhile after* many hardships."

"Will the noble Emir refresh himself after his long journey?" said Hillel.

"My heart is too elate for the body to need relief," said the Emir.

"That may be very true," said Hillel. "At the same time, for my part, I have always thought that the body should be maintained as well as the spirit."

"Withdraw from the side of the couch," said Issachar, the son of Selim, to his companions. "My lord and friend has swooned."

Gradually the tide of life returned to Besso, gradually the heart beat, the hand grew warm. At length, he slowly opened his eyes, and said, "I have been dreaming of my child, even now I see her."

Yes, so vivid had been the vision, that even now, restored entirely to himself, perfectly conscious of the locality and the circumstances that surrounded him, knowing full well that he was in his brother's house at Aleppo, suffering and disabled, keenly recalling his recent interview with Fakredeen, — notwithstanding all these tests of inward and outward perception, still before his entranced and agitated vision hovered the lovely visage of his daughter, a little paler than usual, and an uncommon anxiety blended with its soft expression, but the same rich eyes, and fine contour of countenance that her father had so often gazed on with pride, and recalled in her absence with brooding fondness. "Even now I see her," said Besso.

He could say no more, for the sweetest form in the world had locked him in her arms.

"'T is the letter of the third Cabala," said Issachar, the son of Selim.

CHAPTER X.

TANCRED had profited by his surprise by the children of Rechab in the passes of the stony Arabia, and had employed the same tactics against the Turkish force. By a simulated defence on the borders, and by the careful dissemination of false intelligence, he had allowed the Pacha and his troops to penetrate the mountains, and principally, by a pass which the Turks were assured by their spies that the Ansarey had altogether neglected. The success of these manœuvres had been as complete as the discomfiture and rout of the Turks. Tancred, at the head of the cavalry, had pursued them into the plain, though he had halted, for an instant, before he quitted the mountains, to send a courier to Astarte from himself with the assurance of victory, and the horsetails of the Pacha for a trophy.

It so happened, however, that, while Tancred, with very few attendants, was scouring the plain, and driving before him a panic-struck multitude, who, if they could only have paused and rallied, might in a moment have overwhelmed him; a strong body of Turkish cavalry, who had entered the mountains by a different pass from that in which the principal engagement had taken place, but who, learning the surprise and defeat of the main body, had thought it wise to retreat in order and watch events, debouched at this moment from the

high country into the plain and in the rear of Tancred. Had they been immediately recognised by the fugitives, it would have been impossible for Tancred to escape; but the only impression of the routed Turks was, that a reinforcement had joined their foe, and their disorder was even increased by the appearance in the distance of their own friends. This misapprehension must, however, in time, have been at least partially removed, but Baroni, whose quick glance had instantly detected the perilous incident, warned Tancred immediately.

"We are surrounded, my lord; there is only one course to pursue. To regain the mountains is impossible; if we advance, we enter only a hostile country, and must be soon overpowered. We must make for the eastern desert."

Tancred halted and surveyed the scene: he had with him not twenty men. The Turkish cavalry, several hundreds strong, had discovered their quarry, and were evidently resolved to cut off their retreat.

"Very well," said Tancred, "we are well mounted — we must try the mettle of our steeds. Farewell, Gindarics! Farewell gods of Olympus! To the desert which I ought never to have quitted!" and so speaking, he and his band dashed towards the East.

Their start was so considerable that they baffled their pursuers, who however did not easily relinquish their intended prey. Some shots in the distance, towards nightfall, announced that the enemy had given up the chase. After three

hours of the moon, Tancred and his companions rested at a well not far from a village where they obtained some supplies. An hour before dawn, they again pursued their way over a rich flat country uninclosed yet partially cultivated, with, every now and then, a village nestling in a jungle of Indian fig.

It was the commencement of December, and the country was very parched; but the short though violent season of rain was at hand: this renovates in the course of a week the whole face of Nature, and pours into little more than that brief space the supplies which in other regions are distributed throughout the year. On the third day, before sunset, the country having gradually become desolate and deserted, consisting of vast plains covered with herds, with occasionally some wandering Turkomans or Kurds, Tancred and his companions came within sight of a broad and palmy river — a branch of the Euphrates.

The country round, far as the eye could range, was a kind of downs covered with a scanty herbage, now brown with heat and age. When Tancred had gained an undulating height, and was capable of taking a more extensive survey of the land, it presented, especially towards the south, the same features through an illimitable space.

"The Syrian Desert!" said Baroni; "a fortnight later, and we shall see this land covered with flowers and fragrant with aromatic herbs."

"My heart responds to it," said Tancred. "What is

Damascus, with all its sumptuousness, to this sweet liberty!"

Quitting the banks of the river, they directed their course to the south and struck, as it were into the heart of the desert; yet on the morrow the winding waters again met them. And now there opened on their sight a wondrous scene — as far as the eye could reach innumerable tents; strings of many hundred camels going to, or returning from, the waters; groups of horses picketed about; processions of women with vases on their heads visiting the palmy banks; swarms of children and dogs; spreading flocks; and occasionally an armed horseman bounding about the environs of the vast encampment.

Although scarcely a man was visible when Tancred first caught a glimpse of this Arabian settlement, a band of horsemen suddenly sprang from behind a rising ground and came galloping up to them to reconnoitre and to inquire.

"We are brothers," said Baroni, "for who should be the master of so many camels, but the lord of the Syrian pastures?"

"There is but one God," said the Bedoueen, "and none are lords of the Syrian pastures but the children of Rechab."

"Truly, there is only one God," said Baroni; "go tell the Great Sheikh that his friend the English prince has come here to give him a salaam of peace."

Away bounded back the Bedoueens, and were soon lost in *the crowded* distance.

"All is right," said Baroni: "we shall sup to-night under the pavilion of Amalek."

"I visit him then, at length, in his beautiful pastures," said Tancred; "but, alas! I visit him alone."

They had pulled up their horses, and were proceeding very leisurely towards the encampment, when they observed a cavalcade emerging from the outer boundary of the settlement. This was Amalek himself on one of his steeds of race, accompanied by several of his leading sheikhs, coming to welcome Tancred to his pavilion in the Syrian pastures. A joyful satisfaction sparkled in the bright eyes of the old chieftain, as, at a little distance, he waved his hand with graceful dignity, and pressed his hand to his heart.

"A thousand salaams," he exclaimed, when he had reached Tancred; "there is but one God. I press you to my heart of hearts. There are also other friends, but they are not here."

"Salaam, Great Sheikh! I feel indeed we are brothers. There are friends of whom we must speak and indeed of many things."

Thus conversing, and riding side by side, Amalek and Tancred entered the camp. Nearly five thousand persons were collected together in this wilderness, and two thousand warriors were prepared at a moment's notice to raise their lances in the air. There were nearly as many horses, and ten times as many camels. This wilderness was the principal and favourite resting-place of the Great Sheikh of the children of

Rechab, and the abundant waters and comparatively rich pasturage permitted him to gather around him a great portion of his tribe.

The lamps soon gleamed, and the fires soon blazed; sheep were killed, bread baked, coffee pounded, and the pipe of honour was placed in the hands of Tancred. For an Arabian revel, the banquet was long and rather elaborate. By degrees, however, the guests stole away; the women ceased to peep through the curtains; and the children left off asking Baroni to give them backsheesh. At length, Amalek and Tancred being left alone, the Great Sheikh, who had hitherto evinced no curiosity as to the cause of the presence of his guest, said, "There is a time for all things, for eating and for drinking, also for prayers. There is, also, a season to ask questions. Why is the brother of the Queen of the English in the Syrian Desert?"

"There is much to tell, and much to inquire," said Tancred; "but before I speak of myself, let me know whether you can get me tidings of Eva, the daughter of Besso."

"Is she not living in rooms with many divans?" said Amalek.

"Alas!" said Tancred, "she was a prisoner, and is now a fugitive."

"What children of Gin have done this deed! Are there strange camels drinking at my wells? Is it some accursed Kurd that has stolen her sheep, or some Turkoman, blacker *than night,* that has hankered after her bracelets."

"Nothing of all this, yet more than all this. All shall be told to you, Great Sheikh, yet before I speak, tell me again, can you get me tidings of Eva, the daughter of Besso?"

"Can I fire an arrow that will hit its mark?" said Amalek; "tell me the city of Syria, where Eva the daughter Besso may be found, and I will send her a messenger that would reach her even in the bath, were she there."

Tancred then gave the Great Sheikh a rapid sketch of what had occurred to Eva, and expressed his fear that she might have been intercepted by the Turkish troops. Amalek decided that she must be at Aleppo, and, instantly summoning one of his principal men, he gave instructions for the departure of a trusty scout in that direction.

"Ere the tenth day shall have elapsed," said the Great Sheikh, "we shall have sure tidings. And now let me know, prince of England, by what strange cause, you could have found yourself in the regions of those children of hell, the Ansarey, who, it is well known, worship Eblis in every obscene form."

"It is a long tale," said Tancred, "but I suppose it must be told; but now that you have relieved my mind by sending to Aleppo, I can hardly forget that I have ridden for more than three days, and with little pause. I am not, alas, a true Arab, though I love Arabia and Arabian thoughts — and, indeed, my dear friend, had we not met again, it is impossible to say what might have been my lot, for I now feel, that I could not have much longer undergone the sleep-

less toil I have of late encountered. If Eva be safe, I am content, or would wish to feel so — but what is content, and what is life, and what is man! Indeed, Great Sheikh, the longer I live and the more I think —" and here the chibouque dropped gently from Tancred's mouth, and he himself sunk upon the carpet.

CHAPTER XI.

"Besso is better," said the Consul Pasqualigo to Barizy of the Tower, as he met him on a December morning in the Via Dolorosa.

"Yes, but he is by no means well," quickly rejoined Barizy. "The physician of the English Prince told me —"

"He has not seen the physician of the English Prince!" screamed Pasqualigo, triumphantly.

"I know that," said Barizy, rallying; "but the physician of the English Prince says for flesh-wounds —"

"There are no flesh-wounds," said the Consul Pasqualigo. "They have all healed; 't is an internal shock."

"For internal shocks," said Barizy of the Tower, "there is nothing like rosemary, stewed with salt, and so kept on till it simmers."

"That is very well for a bruise," said the Consul Pasqualigo.

"A bruise is a shock," said Barizy of the Tower.

"Besso should have remained at Aleppo," said the Consul.

"Besso always comes to Jerusalem when he is indisposed," said Barizy; "as he well says, 't is the only air that can cure him; and, if he cannot be cured, why, at least, he can be buried in the Valley of Jehoshaphat."

"He is not at Jerusalem," said the Consul Pasqualigo, maliciously.

"How do you mean?" said Barizy, somewhat confused. "I am now going to inquire after him, and smoke some of his Latakia."

"He is at Bethany," said the Consul.

"Hem!" said Barizy, mysteriously. "Bethany! Will that marriage come off now, think you? I always fancy — when, eh? —"

"She will not marry till her father has recovered," said the Consul.

"This is a curious story," said Barizy. "The regular troops beaten by the Kurds."

"They were not Kurds," said the Consul Pasqualigo. "They were Russians in disguise. Some cannon have been taken, which were cast at St. Petersburg; and, besides, there is a portfolio of state papers found on a Cossack, habited as a Turkoman, which betrays all. The documents are to be published in numbers, with explanatory commentaries. Consul-General Laurella writes from Damascus that the Eastern question is more alive than ever. We are on the eve of great events."

"You don't say so?" said Barizy of the Tower, losing his presence of mind from this overwhelming superiority of information. "I always thought so. Palmerston will never *rest till he gets* Jerusalem."

"The English must have markets," said the Consul Pasqualigo.

"Very just," said Barizy of the Tower. "There will be a great opening here. I think of doing a little myself in cottons; but the house of Besso will monopolize everything."

"I don't think the English can do much here," said the Consul, shaking his head. "What have we to give them in exchange? The people here had better look to Austria, if they wish to thrive. The Austrians also have cottons, and they are Christians. They will give you their cottons, and take your crucifixes."

"I don't think I can deal in crucifixes," said Barizy of the Tower.

"I tell you what, if you won't, your cousin Barizy of the Gate will. I know he has given a great order to Bethlehem."

"The traitor!" exclaimed Barizy of the Tower. "Well, if people will purchase crucifixes and nothing else, they must be supplied. Commerce civilizes man."

"Who is this?" exclaimed the Consul Pasqualigo.

A couple of horsemen, well mounted, but travel-worn, and followed by a guard of Bedoueens, were coming up the Via Dolorosa, and stopped at the house of Hassan Nejid.

"'T is the English Prince," said Barizy of the Tower. "He has been absent six months; he has been in Egypt."

"To see the temples of the fire-worshippers, and to shoot crocodiles. They all do that," said the Consul Pasqualigo.

"How glad he must be to get back to Jerusalem," said

Barizy of the Tower. "There may be larger cities, but there are certainly none so beautiful."

"The most beautiful city in the world is the city of Venice," said Pasqualigo.

"You have never been there," said Barizy.

"But it was built principally by my ancestors," said the Consul, "and I have a print of it in my hall."

"I never heard that Venice was comparable to Jerusalem," said Barizy.

"Jerusalem is, in every respect, an abode fit for swine, compared with Venice," said Pasqualigo.

"I would have you to know, M. Pasqualigo, who call yourself Consul, that the city of Jerusalem is not only the city of God, but has ever been the delight and pride of man."

"Pish!" said Pasqualigo.

"Poh!" said Barizy.

"I am not at all surprised that Besso got out of it as soon as he possibly could."

"You would not dare to say these things in his presence," said Barizy.

"Who says 'dare' to the representative of a European power!"

"I say 'dare' to the son of the Janissary of the Austrian Vice-Consul at Sidon."

"You will hear more of this," said Pasqualigo, fiercely. "I shall make a representation to the Internuncio at Stamboul."

"You had better go there yourself, as you are tired of El Khuds."

Pasqualigo, not having a repartee ready, shot at his habitual comrade a glance of withering contempt, and stalked away.

In the mean time, Tancred dismounted and entered for the first time his house at Jerusalem, of which he had been the nominal tenant for half a year. Baroni was quite at home, as he knew the house in old days, and had also several times visited, on this latter occasion, the suite of Tancred. Freeman and Trueman, who had been forwarded on by the British Consul at Beiroot, like bales of goods, were at their post, bowing as if their master had just returned from his club. But none of the important members of the body were at this moment at hand. Colonel Brace was dining with the English Consul on an experimental plum-pudding, preliminary to the authentic compound, which was to appear in a few days. It was supposed to be the first time that a Christmas pudding had been concocted at Jerusalem, and the excitement in the circle was considerable. The Colonel had undertaken to supervise the preparation, and had been for several days instilling the due instructions into a Syrian cook, who had hitherto only succeeded in producing a result which combined the specific gravity of lead with the general flavour and appearance of a mass of kneaded dates, in a state of fermentation after a long voyage. The Reverend Mr. Bernard was at Bethlehem, assisting the Bishop in catechising some converts who had passed themselves off as true children of Israel, but

who were, in fact, older Christians than either of their examinants; being descendants of some Nestorian families, who had settled in the south of Palestine in the earlier ages of Christianity. As for Doctor Roby, he was culling simples in the valley of the Jordan; and thus it happened, that, when Tancred at length did evince some disposition to settle down quietly under his own roof, and avail himself of the services and society of his friends, not one of them was present to receive and greet him.

Tancred roamed about the house, surveyed his court and garden, sighed, while Baroni rewarded and dismissed their escort. "I know not how it is," he at length said to his intendant, "but I never could have supposed that I could have felt so sad and spiritless at Jerusalem."

"It is the reaction, my lord, after a month's wandering in the desert. It is always so: the world seems tame."

"I am disappointed that Besso is not here. I am most anxious to see him."

"Shall I send for the Colonel, my Lord," said Baroni, shaking Tancred's Arabian cloak.

"Well, I think I should let him return naturally," said Tancred; "sending for him is a scene; and I do not know why, Baroni, but I feel, I feel unstrung. I am surprised that there are no letters from England; and yet I am rather glad too, for a letter —"

"Received some months after its date," said Baroni, "is *like the visit of a* spectre. I shudder at the sight of it."

"Heigho!" said Tancred, stretching his arm, and half-speaking to himself, "I wish the battle of Gindarics had never ceased, but that, like some hero of enchantment, I had gone on for ever fighting."

"Ah! there is nothing like action," said Baroni, unscrewing his pistols.

"But what action is there in this world?" said Tancred. "The most energetic men in Europe are mere busy bodies. Empires are now governed like parishes, and a great statesman is only a select vestryman. And they are right: unless we bring man nearer to heaven, unless government become again divine, the insignificance of the human scheme must paralyse all effort."

"Hem!" said Baroni, kneeling down and opening Tancred's rifle-case. The subject was getting a little too deep for him. "I perceive," he said to himself, "that my Lord is very restless. There is something at the bottom of his mind, which, perhaps, he does not quite comprehend himself; but it will come out."

Tancred passed the day alone in reading, or walking about his room with an agitated and moody step. Often, when his eye rested on the page, his mind wandered from the subject, and he was frequently lost in profound and protracted reverie. The evening drew on; he retired early to his room, and gave orders that he was not to be disturbed. At a later hour, Colonel Brace returned, having succeeded in his principal enterprise, and having also sung the national anthem. He was

greatly surprised to hear that Lord Montacute had returned; but Baroni succeeded in postponing the interview until the morrow. An hour after the Colonel, the Rev. Mr. Bernard returned from Bethlehem. He was in great tribulation, as he had been pursued by some of the vagabonds of that ruffianly district; a shot had even been fired after him; but this was only to frighten him. The fact is, the leader of the band was his principal catechumen, who was extremely desirous of appropriating a very splendid copy of the Holy writings, richly bound and adorned with massy golden clasps, which the Duchess of Bellamont had presented to the Rev. Mr. Bernard before his departure, and which he always, as a sort of homage to one whom he sincerely respected, displayed on any eminent instance of conversion.

The gates of the city were shut when Doctor Roby returned, laden with many rare balsams. The consequence was, he was obliged to find quarters in a tomb in the valley of Jehoshaphat. As his attendant was without food, when his employer had sunk into philosophic repose, he supped off the precious herbs and roots, and slaked his thirst with a draught from the fountain of Siloah.

Tancred passed a night of agitating dreams. Sometimes he was in the starry desert, sometimes in the caverned dungeons of Gindarics. Then again, the scene changed to Bellamont Castle, but it would seem that Fakredeen was its lord; and when Tancred rushed forward to embrace his mother, she *assumed the form* of the Syrian goddess, and yet the face was

the face of Eva. Though disturbed, he slept, and when he woke, he was for a moment quite unconscious of being at Jerusalem. Although within a week of Christmas, no sensible difference had yet occurred in the climate. The golden sun succeeded the silver moon, and both reigned in a clear blue sky. You may dine at night on the terrace of your house at Jerusalem in January, and find a serene and benignant atmosphere.

Tancred rose early; no one was stirring in the house except the native servants, and Mr. Freeman, who was making a great disturbance about hot water. Tancred left a message with this gentleman for the Colonel and his companions, begging that they might all meet at breakfast, and adding that he was about to stroll for half an hour. Saying this, he quitted the house, and took his way by the gate of Stephen to the Mount of Olives.

It was a delicious morn, wonderfully clear, and soft, and fresh. It seemed a happy and a thriving city, — that forlorn Jerusalem, as Tancred, from the heights of Olivet, gazed upon its noble buildings, and its cupolaed houses of free stone, and its battlemented walls and lofty gates. Nature was fair, and the sense of existence was delightful. It seemed to Tancred that a spicy gale came up the ravines of the wilderness, from the farthest Arabia.

Lost in prolonged reverie, the hours flew on. The sun was mounting in the heavens, when Tancred turned his step, but, instead of approaching the city, he pursued a winding path in an opposite direction. That path led to Bethany.

CHAPTER XII.

The crest of the palm tree in the garden of Eva glittered in the declining sun; and the lady of Bethany sate in her kiosk on the margin of the fountain, unconsciously playing with a flower, and gazing in abstraction on the waters. She had left Tancred with her father, now convalescent. They had passed the morning together, talking over the strange events that had occurred since they first became acquainted on this very spot: and now the lady of Bethany had retired to her own thoughts.

A sound disturbed her: she looked up and recognised Tancred.

"I could not refrain from seeing the sun set on Arabia," he said; "I had almost induced the noble Besso to be my companion."

"The year is too old," said Eva, not very composed.

"They should be Midsummer nights," said Tancred, "as on my first visit here; that hour thrice blessed!"

"We know not what is blessed in this world," said Eva, mournfully.

"I feel I do," murmured Tancred; and he also seated himself on the margin of the fountain.

"Of all the strange incidents and feelings that we have been talking over this day," said Eva, "there seems to me *but one result*; and that is — sadness."

"It is certainly not joy," said Tancred.

"There comes over me a great despondency," said Eva, "I know not why — my convictions are as profound as they were, my hopes should not be less high — and yet —"

"And what?" said Tancred, in a low, sweet voice, for she hesitated.

"I have a vague impression," said Eva, sorrowfully, "that there have been heroic aspirations wasted, and noble energies thrown away; and yet, perhaps," she added, in a faltering tone, "there is no one to blame. Perhaps, all this time, we have been dreaming over an unattainable end, and the only source of deception is our own imagination."

"My faith is firm," said Tancred; "but if anything could make it falter, it would be to find you wavering."

"Perhaps it is the twilight hour," said Eva, with a faint smile. "It sometimes makes one sad."

"There is no sadness where there is sympathy," said Tancred, in a low voice. "I have been, I am sad, when I am alone; but when I am with you, my spirit is sustained — and would be, come what might."

"And yet —" said Eva; and she paused.

"And what?"

"Your feelings cannot be what they were before all this happened; when you thought only of a divine cause, of stars, of angels, and of our peculiar and gifted land. No, no; now it is all mixed up with intrigue, and politics, and management, and baffled schemes, and cunning arts of men. You may be, you

are, free from all this, but your faith is not the same. You no longer believe in Arabia."

"Why thou to me art Arabia," said Tancred, advancing and kneeling at her side. "The angel of Arabia, and of my life and spirit! Talk not to me of faltering faith: mine is intense. Talk not to me of leaving a divine cause: why, thou art my cause, and thou art most divine! O Eva! deign to accept the tribute of my long agitated heart! Yes, I too, like thee, am sometimes full of despair, but it is only when I remember that I love, and love, perhaps, in vain!"

He had clasped her hand; his passionate glance met her eye, as he looked up with adoration to a face infinitely distressed. Yet she withdrew not her hand, as she murmured, with averted head, "We must not talk of these things; we must not think of them. You know all."

"I know of nothing, I will know of nothing, but of my love."

"There are those to whom I belong; and to whom you belong. Yes," she said, trying to withdraw her hand. "Fly, fly from me, son of Europe and of Christ!"

"I am a Christian in the land of Christ," said Tancred, "and I kneel to a daughter of my Redeemer's race. Why should I fly?"

"Oh! this is madness!"

"Say, rather, inspiration," said Tancred, "for I will not quit this fountain by which we first met until I am told, as *you now will* tell me," he added, in a tone of gushing tender-

ness, "that our united destinies shall advance the sovereign purpose of our lives. Talk not to me of others, of those who have claims on you or on myself. I have no kindred, no country, and, as for the ties that would bind you—shall such world-worn bonds restrain our consecrated aim? Say but you love me, and I will trample them to the dust."

The head of Eva fell upon his shoulder. He impressed an embrace upon her cheek. It was cold, insensible. Her hand, which he still held, seemed to have lost all vitality. Overcome by contending emotions, the principle of life seemed to have deserted her. Tancred laid her reclining figure with gentleness on the mats of the kiosk; he sprinkled her pale face with some drops from the fountain; he chafed her delicate hand. Her eyes at length opened, and she sighed. He placed beneath her head some of the cushions that were at hand. Recovering, she slightly raised herself, leant upon the marble margin of the fountain, and looked about her with a wildered air.

At this moment a shout was heard, repeated and increased; soon the sound of many voices and the tramp of persons approaching. The vivid but brief twilight had died away. Almost suddenly it had become night. The voices became more audible, the steps were at hand. Tancred recognised his name, frequently repeated. Behold a crowd of many persons, several of them bearing torches. There was Colonel Brace in the van; on his right was the Rev. Mr. Bernard; on his left, Doctor Roby. Freeman and Trueman and several

guides and native servants were in the rear, most of them proclaiming the name of Lord Montacute.

"I am here," said Tancred, advancing from the kiosk, pale and agitated. "Why am I wanted?"

Colonel Brace began to explain, but all seemed to speak at the same time.

The Duke and Duchess of Bellamont had arrived at Jerusalem.

THE END.

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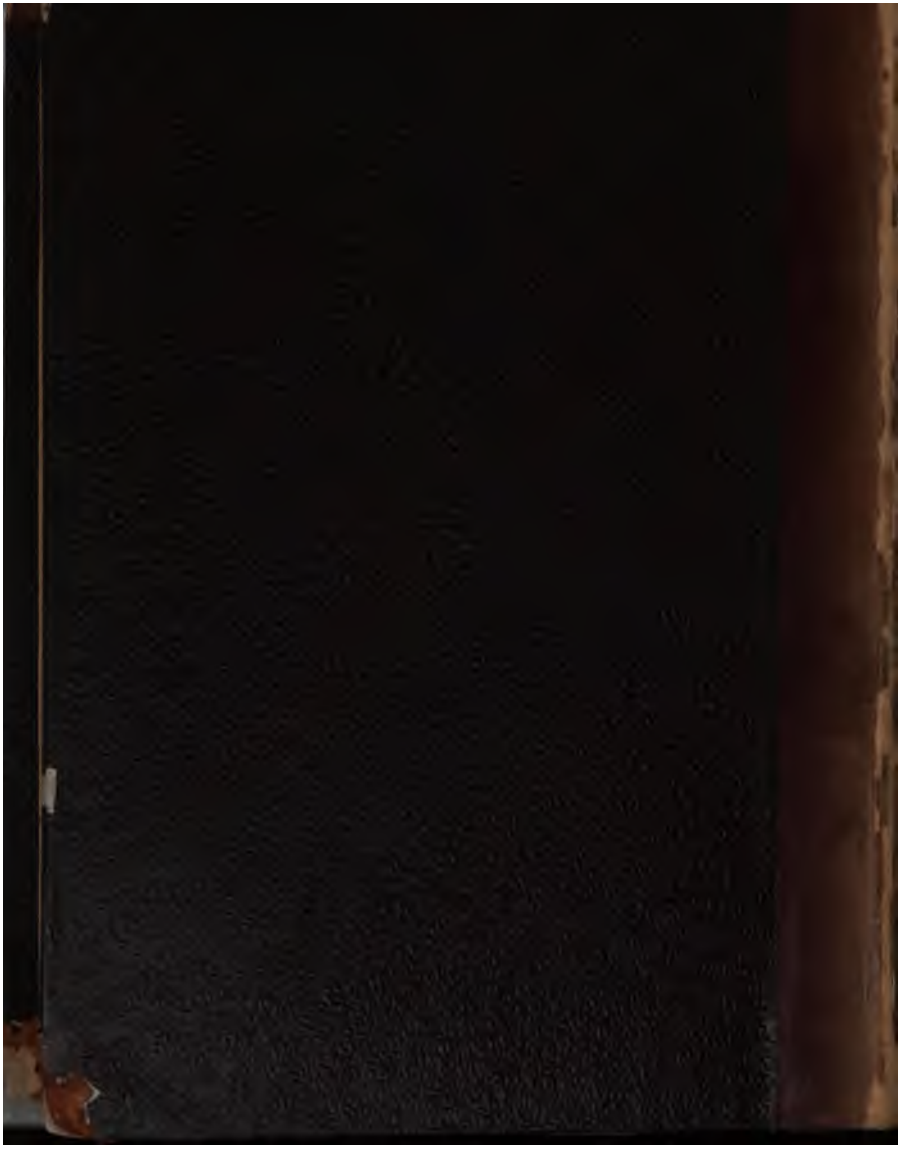
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